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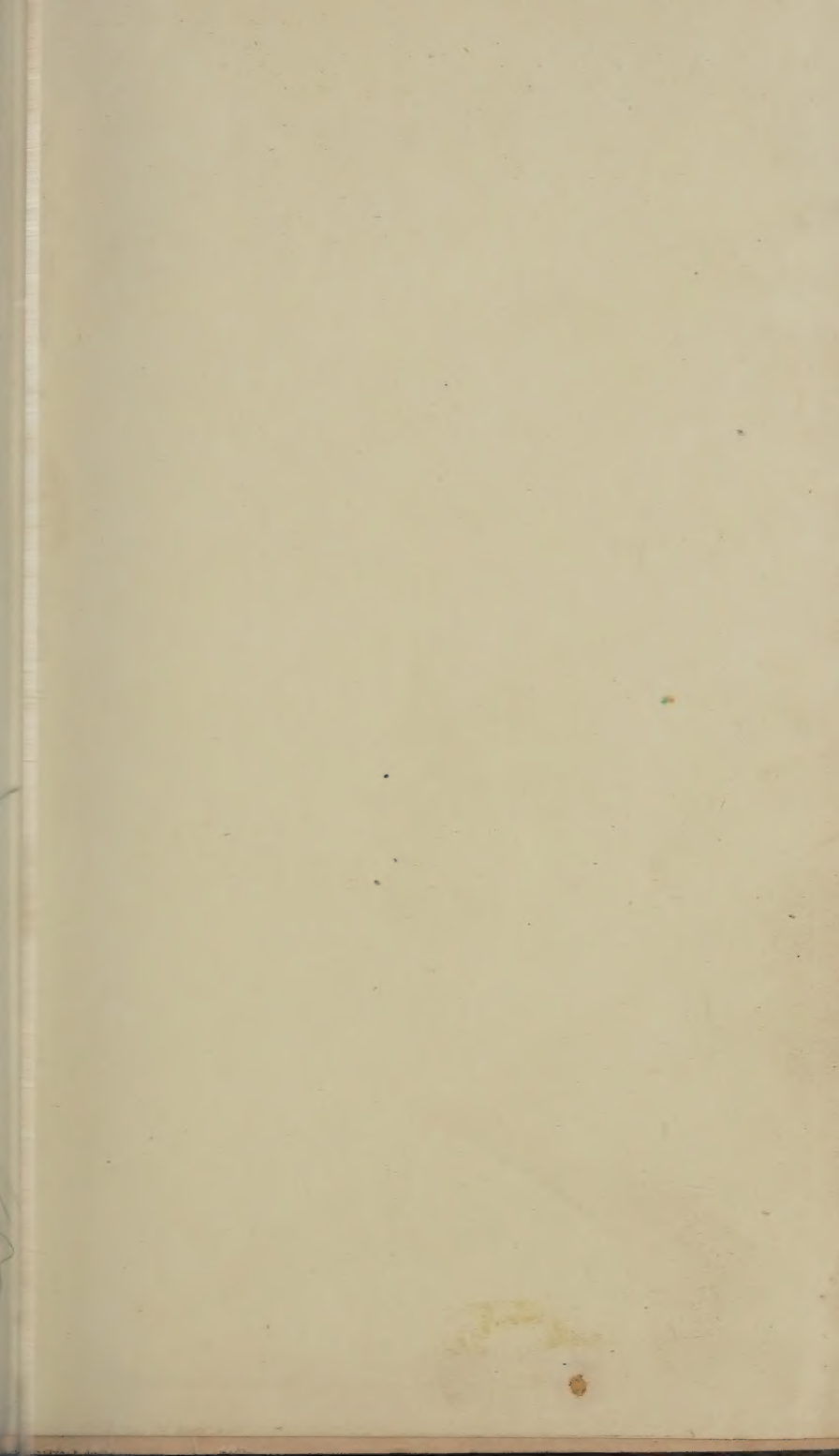
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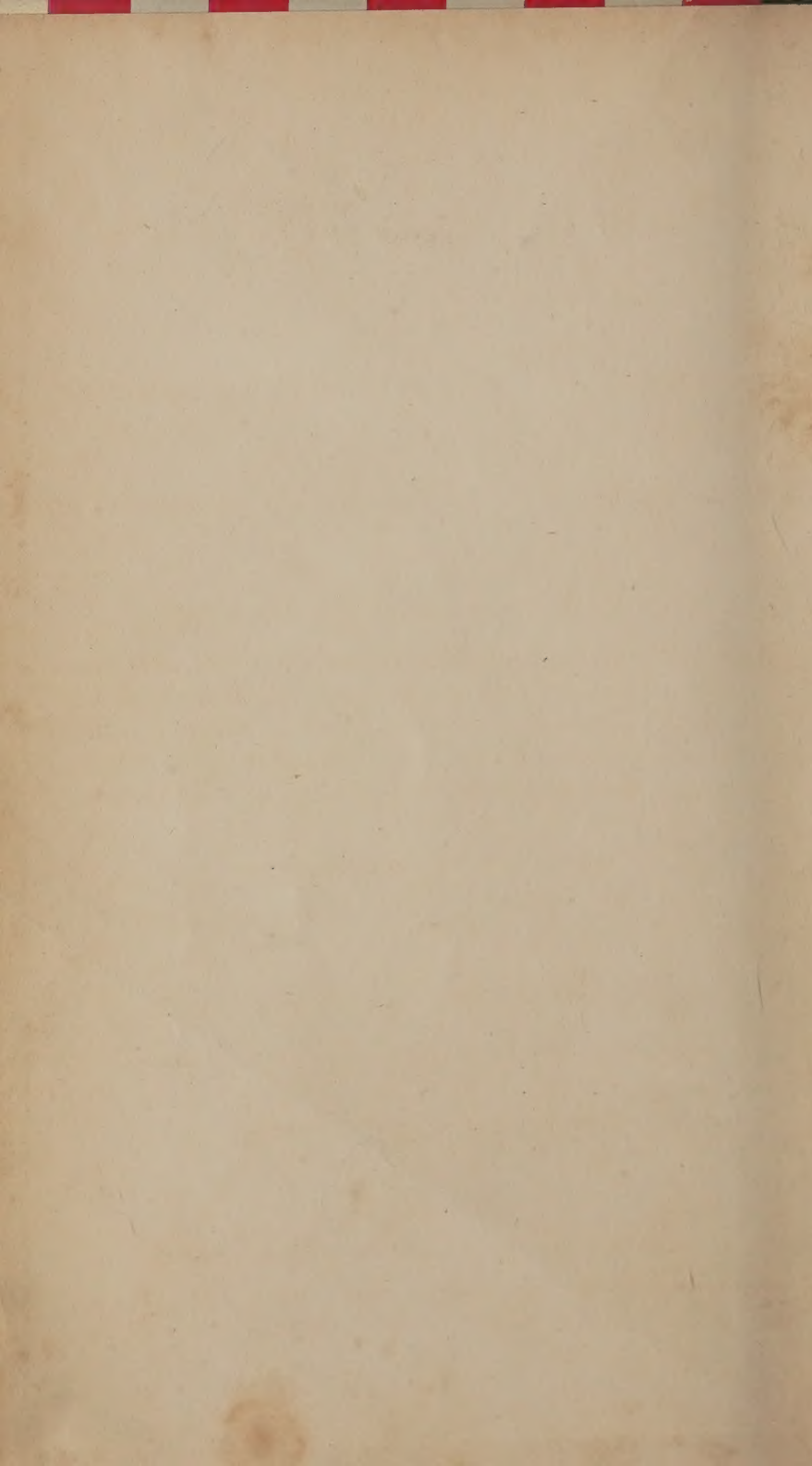
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THE

Parliamentary Debates,

DURING THE

SECOND SESSION OF THE SECOND PARLIAMENT

OF THE

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT-BRITAIN AND IRELAND

AND OF THE

KINGDOM OF GREAT-BRITAIN THE NINETEENTH,

Appointed to meet at Westminster the Sixth Day of October, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Three; and from thence continued, by Prorogation, to the Twenty-second Day of November, in the Forty-fourth Year of the Reign of King GEORGE the THIRD, Annoque Domini, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Three.

VOL. I.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD

BETWEEN 22d NOVEMBER, 1803, AND 29th MARCH, 1804.

L O N D O N :

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1804.

while the selection and arrangement of the several *Accounts* and *Returns* must be of inestimable value to all those who turn their attention to subjects of finance or political economy, to military or naval affairs, or, indeed, to any subject connected with the resources of the country.—As the work has, in the short space of half a session, attained to such an extent of circulation, and such a degree of pre-eminence, as fully to warrant the supposition, that it is the *only* compilation at all likely to be regarded as an authentic Record of the Legislative Proceedings of the present time, so the Editor confidently assures the Public, that success, however conspicuous and flattering, will produce no relaxation in his labour or his care, but that will, on the contrary, operate as a stimulus to the attainment of still greater perfection.

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AN ALPHABETICAL LIST

OF THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

As it stood at the opening of the Session, November 22, 1804.

Abbot, Rt. Hon. Charles, Speaker, Woodstock	Berkeley, Hon. Geo. Craufield Gloucestershire	Castlereagh, Visc. Down County Cavendish, Lord Geo. Aug. Hen. Derbyshire
Acheson, Hon. Archibald, Armagh County	Bernard, Thomas, King's County	Caulfield, Hon. Hen. Armagh Co.
Adair, Robert, Camelford	Bertie, Albemarle, Stamford	Chaplin, Charles, Lincolnshire
Adams, Charles, Weymouth, &c.	Best, Wm. Draper, Petersfield	Chapman, Ch. Newtown, Hants
Adams, James, Harwich	Binning, Lord, St. Germain	Chester, Charles, Castle-Rising
Adams, William, Totness	Bishop, Sir Cecil, Bart. New Shoreham	Chichester, Lord Spencer Stanley, Carrickfergus
Addington, Rt. Hon. H. Devises	Blackburne, John, Lancashire	Chinnery, Sir B. Bart. Bandon Bridge
Addington, Rt. Hon. John Hiley, Harwich	Blackburn, John, Newport, Hants	Cholmondely, Thos. Cheshire
Ainslie, Rt. Sharpe, St. Michael	Blandford, Marq. of Tregony	Chute, William, Hampshire
Alcock, Wm. Congreve, Waterford City	Bligh, Thomas, Meath County	Clements, Visc. Leitrim County
Alexander, Boyd, Glasgow, &c.	Bloxam, Sir Mat. Kt. Maidstone	Clephane, David, Kinross-shire
Alexander, Henry, Old Sarum	Bond, Nathaniel, Corff Castle	Clive, Hon. Robert, Ludlow
Allan, Alexander, Berwic	Boote, Edw. Wilba. Newcastle- under-Lyne	Clive, William, Bishop's Castle
Allen, Jefferys, Bridgewater	Bouverie, Hon. Ed. Northampton	Cochrane, Hon. Alex. Forrester, Dumfermlin, &c.
Amyatt, James, Southampton	Boyle, Viscount, Cork County	Cockerell, Charles, Tregony
Anderson, Sir J. W. Bart. London	Bradshaw, Rob. Haldane, Bracley	Cocks, Hon. John-Sommers, Rye- gate
Andover, Viscount, Arundel	Bragge, Rt. Hon. Chas. Bristol	Codrington, Christ. Tewkesbury
Andrews, Miles Peter, Bewdley	Brandling, Ch. John, Newcastle- upon-Tyne	Coke, Dan. Parker, Nottingham
Annesley, Francis, Reading	Brodie, James, Elginshire	Coke, Edward, Derby
Anson, Thomas, Lichfield	Brodrick, Hon. Wm. Whitechurch	Coke, Thomas Wm. Norfolk
Antonie, Wm. Lee, Bedford	Brogden, James, Launceston	Cole, Hon. G. L. Fermanagh Co.
Archdall, Mervin, Jun. Fermanagh County	Brome, Viscount, Suffolk	Colquhoun, Jas. Dumbartonshire
Archdall, Richard, Dundalk	Brooke, Charles, Ilchester	Combe, Harvey Christ. London
Ashley, Hon. Cropley, Dorchester	Brooke, Lord, Warwic	Cooke, Bryan, Malton
Astley, Sir Jacob Henry, Bart. Norfolk County	Brooke, Tho. Newtown, Lancas.	Cooper, Joshua Edw. Sligoe Cou.
Atkins, John, Arundel	Browne, Right Hon. Denis, Mayo County	Coote, Sir Eyre, K. B. Queen's County
Aubrey, Sir John, Bt. Aldeburgh	Browne, Fran. John, Dorsetshire	Cornwall, Sir Geo. Bart. Here- fordshire
Babington, Thomas, Leicester	Brown, Is. Hawkins, Bridgenorth	Cornwallis, James, Eye
Bagwell, John, Tipperary County	Bruce, Patrio Crauford, Evesham	Cornwallis, Hon. Wm. Eye
Bagwell, Wm. Clonmell Borough	Bruce, Lord, Marlborough	Corry, Right Hon. Isaac, Newry
Bagenel, Wal. Catherlogh County	Buller, Edward, East Looe	Courtenay, John, Appleby
Baillie, Evan, Bristol	Buller, James, Exeter	Cowper, Hon. Edward Spencer, Hertford
Baillie, Geo. Jun. Berwicsire	Buller, James, West Looe	Cranley, Viscount, Guilford
Baker, John, Canterbury	Buller, John, East Looe	Cranford, Robert, East Retford
Baker, Pet. Wm. Wootton-Bassel	Bullock, John, Essex	Creevey, Thomas, Thetford
Baldwin, Wm. Westbury	Bunbury, Sir T. C. Bart. Suffolk	Crosbie, James, Kerry County
Bampfylde, Sir Ch. W. Bt. Exeter	Burdet-Jones, Sir F. Bt. Middlesex	Curtis, Sir Wm. Bart. London
Banks, Henry, Corff Castle	Burdon, Rowl. Durham County	Curwen, John Christian, Carlisle
Barclay, George, Bridport	Burland, John Berkely, Totness	Cuzon, Hon. Robert, Clitheroe
Barclay, Sir Rt. Bart. Newtown, Hants	Burroughs, William, Enniskillen	Cust, Hon. John, Clitheroe
Barham, Jos. Foster, Stocbridge	Burton, Francis, Oxford City	Dallas, Robert, St. Michael
Baring, Sir Francis, Bart. Chipping Wycombe	Burton, Hon. F. Nath. Clare Co.	Dalkeith, Earl of, Ludgershall,
Barlow, Francis Wm. Coventry	Burton, Nap. Christie, Beverley	Daly, Denis Bowes, Galway Town
Barlow, Hugh, Pembroke	Butler, Hon. Chas. Kilkenny City	Dashwood, Sir H. W. Bt. Wood- stoc
Barne, Snowden, Dunwich	Butler, Hon. Js. Kilkenny County	Dawkins, James, Chippenham
Bastard, Edmund, Dartmouth	Buxton, Sir Rob. J. Bart. Bedwin	Dawson, Richard, Monaghan Co.
Bastard, J. Pollexfen, Devonshire	Cyng, George, Middlesex	De Blaquiere, Ld. K. B. Downton
Beach, Mich. Hicks, Cirencester	Calcraft, John, Wareham	Denison, John, Colchester
Beaumont, Tho. Rd. Northumber- land	Calvert, John, Huntingdon	Dent, John, Lancaster
Bennett, R. H. A. Launceston	Calvert, Nicholson, Hertford	Devaynes, William, Barnstaple
Bent, Robert, Aylesbury	Campbell, John, Anstruther, &c.	Deverell, Robert, Saltash
Benyon, Richard, Pontefract	Campbell, John, Rothsay, &c.	Dickenson, Wm. Somersetshire
Beresford, Ld. Geo. T. London- derry County	Campbell, Lord John D. E. H. Argyllshire	Dickenson, Wm. jun. Lestwithiel
Beresford, Rt. Hon. John, Water- ford County	Canning, Right Hon. Geo. Tralee	Dicks, Fras. Northamptonshire
Beresford, J. Claud, Dublin City	Carberry, Lord, Rutland	Dickson, Wm. Selkirk, &c.
	Carew, Reginald Pole, Powey	Dillon, Hon. H. Aug. Mayo Coun.
	Carnegie, Sir Dav. Bt. Forfarshire	
	Cartwright, W. Ralph, Northamp- tonshire	

- Dolbin, Sir W. Bt. Oxford University
 Douglas, Sir G. Bt. Roxburghshire
 Douglas, Marquis of, Lancaster
 Dugdale, Stratford Dugdale, Warwickshire
 Duigenan, Pat., Armagh Borough
 Duncombe, Cha. jun., Aldborough
 Dundas, Charles, Berks
 Dundas, Hon. Charles Laurence, Malton
 Dundas, Hon. George Heneage Laurence, Richmond
 Dundas, Hon. Laurence, York
 Dundas, Philip, Gatton
 Dundas, Hon. Rob. Edinburghsh.
 Dundas, Right Hon. Wm. Sutherlandshire
 Dunlop, Viscount, Gawley County
 Dupre, James, Aylesbury
 Durand, John Hodson, Maidstone
 Egerton, William, Cheshire
 Elford, Sir Wm. Bart., Plymouth
 Eliot, Hon. John, Leskeard
 Eliot, Hon. Wm. Leskeard
 Eliot, William, Peterborough
 Ellis, Charles Rose, Seaford
 Ellison, Richard, Lincoln
 Elphinstone-Fleming, Hon. Chas., Stirlingshire
 Erskine, Sir James St. Clair, Bart. Kirkaldy, &c.
 Erskine, hon. Tho., Portsmouth
 Erskine, Sir Wm. Bt., Fifeshire
 Estcourt, Thomas, Criclade
 Everett, Thomas, Ludgershall
 Euston, Earl of, Camb. University
 Eyre, Ant. Hardolph, Nottinghamshire
 Falkiner, Fred. John, Dublin Co.
 Fane, Francis, Dorchester
 Fane Henry, Lime Regis
 Fane, John, Oxfordshire
 Fane, Hon. Thomas, Lime Regis
 Farquhar, James, Brechin, &c.
 Fellowes, Hon. Newton, Andover
 Fellowes, Robert, Norwich
 Fellowes, Wm. Hen., Huntingdon
 Ferguson, James, Aberdeenshire
 Fetherstone, Sir T. Bt., Longford County
 Finch, Hn. Edw. Cambridge
 Fitzgerald, Rt. Hon. James, Ennis
 Fitzgerald, Right Hon. Maurice, Kerry County
 Fitzgerald, Ld. Rt. L., Kildare Co.
 Fitzgerald, Rob. Uniacke, Cork County
 Fitzharris, Viscount, Helston
 Fitzhugh, William, Tiverton
 Fitzpatrick, Rt. Hn. Rd. Tavistock
 Fitzroy, Lord Chas., Edmundsbury
 Fitzwilliam, Visc., Wilton
 Fleming, Sir M. le, Bt., Westmorland
 Fletcher, Sir Hen. Bt. Cumberland
 Foley, Hon. Andrew, Droitwich
 Foljambe, Fr. Ferrand, Higham Ferrers
 Folkes, Sir M. B. Bt., King's Lynn
 Folkestone, Visc. New Sarum
 Fonblanque, John, Camelford
 Forester, Cecil, Wenloe
 Fortescue, Wm. Ch. Louth County
- Foster, Rt. Hon. J., Louth County
 Fox, Hon. Ch. James, Westminster
 Francis, Philip, Appleby
 Frankland, William, Thirsk
 Frederick, Sir John, Bt. Surrey
 French, Arthur, Roscommon Co.
 Fuller, John, Sussex
 Fydel, Thomas, jun. Boston
 Gamon, Sir Rich. Bt. Winchester
 Gardner, Lord, Westminster
 Garland, George, Poole
 Garrard, Ch. Drake, Agmondesham
 Garthshore, Wm. Weymouth, &c.
 Gascoyne, Isaac, Liverpool
 Geary, Sir William, Bt., Kent
 Giles, Daniel, East Grinstead
 Glenbervie, Lord, Hastings
 Goddard, Ambrose, Wiltshire
 Godfrey, Thomas, Hythe
 Gordon, Alex., Penrose Cumming, Fortrose &c.
 Gower, Lord G. L. Staffordshire
 Gower, Edw. Leveson, Truro
 Graham, Sir James, Bt. Ripon
 Graham, James, Cockermonth
 Graham, Thomas, Perthshire
 Grant, Charles, Invernesshire
 Grant, Francis Wm. Cullen, &c.
 Grant, Right Hon. Sir Wm. Kt., Bamfshire
 Greene, Wm., Dungarvon Bo.
 Gregor, Francis, Cornwall
 Greenfell, Pascoe, Marlow
 Grenville, Rt. Hon. Thomas, Buckingham
 Greville, Hon. R. Fulk, Windsor
 Grey, Hon. Chs. Northumberland
 Grimstone, Hon. Jas. Walter, St. Albans
 Grosvenor, Richard Earle Drax, Chester
 Grosvenor, Thomas, Chester
 Gunning, Geo. W., Hastings
 Hamilton, Lord Arch. Lanerksire
 Hamilton, Sir C. Bt. Dungannon
 Hamilton, Hans, Dublin County
 Hammet, John, Taunton
 Hamond, Sir And. S. Bt. Ipswich
 Hardman, Edw. Drogheda Co & To
 Hardolph Ant. Nottinghamshire
 Hare, James, Knaresborough
 Harrison, John, Thetford
 Hartopp, Sir Ed. C. Bt., Leicestersh.
 Harvey, Eliab, Essex
 Hawkesbury, Lord, Rye
 Hawkins, Sir Chris. Bt., Grampond
 Hawthorne, Chas. Stewart, Downpatrick
 Heathote, Sir Gil. Bt. Lincolnshire
 Heathcote, John, Ripon
 Heathcote, Sir Wm. Bt., Hampshire
 Henderson, Ant. Braeley
 Hill, Sir Geo. Fitzg. Bt., Londonderry City
 Hill, Sir Rich. Bt., Shropshire
 Hill, Hon. William, Shrewsbury
 Hilliard, Edward, Horsham
 Binchinbrook, Visc. Huntingdons.
 Hipplesley, Sir Jn. Cox, Bt., Sudbury
 Hobhouse, Benjamin, Grampond
 Hodson, John, Wigan
 Holdsworth, Arthur Howe, Dartmouth
 Holford, Geo. Peter, Rossiney
- Hollad Hen. jun., Okehampton
 Holland, Sir Nathaniel, Bt., Great Bedwin
 Honeyman, Robert, Orkney
 Honeywood, Filmer, Kent
 Honeywood, Sir In. Bt., Honiton
 Hope, Hon. Alex., Linlithgowshire
 Hope, Hon. Chs. Haddingtonshire
 Hope, Rt. Hon. Chs., Edinburgh
 Horrocks, John, Preston
 Howard, Henry, Gloucester
 Hughes, Wm. Lewis, Wallingford
 Hulkes, James, Rochester
 Hume, Wm. Hoare, Wiclow County
 Huntingfield, Lord, Dunwich
 Hurst, Robert, Shaftesbury
 Hussey, William, New Sarum
 Hutchinson, Hon. Christopher Hely, Cork City
 Jaffray, John, East Retford.
 Jeffery, John, Poole
 Jekyll, Joseph, Calne
 Jephson, Denham, Mallow
 Jervis, Thos. Yarmouth, Norfolk
 Jervoise, Jerv. Clarke, Yarmouth, Isle of Wight
 Inglis, Sir Hugh, Bt. Ashburton
 Joddrell, Henry, Bramper
 Johnes, Thomas, Cardiganshire
 Johnstone, George, Heydon
 Joliffe, Hylton, Petersfield
 Jones, Tho. Tyrwhitt, Athlone Bo.
 Jones, Walter, Coleraine Borough
 Keane, Sir John, Bt., Youghall
 Keck, G. A. L., Leicestershire
 Keene, Whitshed, Montgomery
 Kensington, Lord, Haverfordwest
 Ker, Rd. Gervas, Newport, Hants
 King, Hon. Edw., Roscommon Co.
 King, Sir John Dashwood, Bt. Chipping Wycombe
 Kingston, John, Lynton
 Kinnaird, Hon. Chs. Leominster
 Kirkwall, Visc. Heytesbury
 Knight, Rich. Payne, Lndlow
 Knox, Hon. Geo. Trinity Col. Dnb.
 Kynaston-Powell, Jn. Shropshire
 Ladbroke, Robert, Winchelsea
 Lamb, Thomas Davis, Rye
 Lambe, Hon. Penniston, Hertfordshire
 Lambton, Ralph John, Durham
 Langham, James, St. Germain
 Langmead, Philip, Plymouth
 Langton, Wm. Gore, Somersetshire
 Lascelles, Hon. Edw. Northallerton
 Lascelles, Hon. Hen. Yorkshire
 Latouche, Dav. jun. Catherlogh Co.
 Latouche, John, jun. Dublin City
 Latouche, Peter, Leitrim County
 Latouche, Robt. Kildare County
 Laurence, French, Peterborough
 Laurie, Sir Robt. Bt., Dumfriesshire
 Lawley, Sir Robt. Bt., Newcastle-under-Line
 Lee, Edward, Waterford County
 Lefevre, Ch. Shaw, Bodmyn
 Leigh, James Henry, Marlborough
 Leigh, Robert Holt, Wigan
 Leland, John, Stamford
 Lemon, John, Truro
 Lemon, Sir Wm. Bt. Cornwall
 Lennox, Charles, Sussex
 Leslie, Chas. Powell, Monaghan Co

Leycester, Hugh, Milborne Port	O'Brien, Sir Ed. Bt. Clare County	Ryder, Hon. Richard, Tiverton
Littleton, Sir Edw. Bt. Staffordshire	Odell, Wm. Limeric County	St. John Ambrose, Callington
Lloyd, James Martin, Steyning	O'Hara, Chas. Sligoe County	St. John, Hon. St. And. Bedfordshire
Loftus, Earl, Wexford County	Oliver, Chas. Silver, Limeric Co.	Salisbury, Sir Rt. Bt. Brecon
Loftus, William, Tamworth	O'Neil, Hon. J. R. B. Antrim County	Sargent, John, Bodmy
Long, Rt. Hon. Chs. Wendover	Orchard, Paul, Callington	Savage, Francis, Down County
Longfield, Mountfort, Cork City	Ord, Wm. Morpeth	Savile, Christopher, Heydon
Lopez, Manaseh, New Romney	Ormsby, Chas. M. Catherlogh Boro'	Saunderson, Francis, Cavan County
Lovaine, Lord, Beeralston	Osborne, Ld. Fra. Godolph, Lewes	Scott, Claude, Malmesbury
Loveden, Ed. Loveden, Shaftesbury	Osborne, John, Bedfordshire	Scott, David, St. Andrew's, &c.
Lowther, James, Westmorland	Ossulston, Lord, Steyning	Scott, Hon. John, Boroughbridge
Lowther, John, Cumberland	Paget, Hon. Arthur, Anglesey	Scott, Joseph, Worcester
Lubbock, John, Leominster	Paget, Hon. Edw. Carnarvon	Scott, Samuel, Malmesbury
Lushington, Sir S. Bt. Penryn	Paget, Lord, Milborne Port	Scott, Rt. Hon. Sir William, Knt.
Luttrell, John Fownes, Minehead	Palk, Sir Laurence, Bt. Devonshire	Oxford University
Lygon, Wm. Worcestershire	Palk, Walter, Ashburton	Scudamore, John, Hereford
Macdowell, Andrew, Wigtownsh.	Palmer, John, Bath	Seymour, Lord Robt. Orford
Macdowell, Wm. Renfrewshire	Parsons, Sir Lau. Bt. King's Co.	Shakespeare, Arthur, Richmond
Mackenzie-Fraser, A. Cromartysh.	Patten, Peter, Newtown, Lanc.	Shelley, Henry, jun. Lewes
M'Mahon, John, Aldeburgh	Patteson, John, Minehead	Shelley, Timothy, Shoreham
Macnaghten, E. A. Antrim Co.	Pedley, John, Hindon	Sheridan, Rd. Brinsley, Stafford
Maddocks, Wm. Augustus, Boston	Peel, Sir Robt. Bt. Tamworth	Shuckburgh-Evelyn, Sir Geo. Aug.
Maitland, John, Chippenham	Peirse, Henry, Northallerton	Wm. Bt. Warwickshire
Maitland, Hon. Tho. Jedburgh, &c.	Pelham, Hon. C. A. Gt. Grimsby	Shum, Geo. Honiton
Mann, Sir Horace, Bt. Sandwich	Pellow, Sir Edw. Bt. Barnstaple	Sibthorp, Humphrey, Lincoln
Manners, Ld. C. Som. Cambridgesh.	Penn, John, Helston	Simpson, Hon. John, Wenloo
Manners, Lord Robt. Scarborough	Penn, Richard, Haslemere	Sinclair, Sir John, Bt. Buteshire
Manners, Robert, Cambridge	Perceval, Hon. Sp. Northampton	Sitwell, Francis, Berwic
Manners, Sir Wm. Bt. Ilchester	Petty, Lord Henry, Calne	Sloane, Hans. Lestwithiel
Manning, Wm. Lympington	Phillips, John Geo. Carmarthen	Smith, Charles, Westbury
Markham, John, Portsmouth	Phipps, Hon. Edm. Scarborough	Smith, George, Midhurst
Marshall, Visc. Dowton	Pierrepont, Hon. Chas. Herbert	Smith, John, Wendover
Martin, James, Tewkesbury	Nottinghamshire	Smith, John Spencer, Dove
Martin, Richard, Galway County	Pitt, John, Gloucester	Smith, Joshua, Devizes
Mathew, Visc. Tipperary County	Pitt, Rt. Hon. Wm. Cambridge Uni.	Smith, Samuel, Leicester
Mathews, John, Herefordshire	Pitt, Wm. Morton, Dorsetshire	Smith, Tho. Asheton, Andover
May, Edward, Belfast	Plumer, Wm. Hertfordshire	Smith, Thos. West Looe
Mellish, Wm. Great Grimsby	Pocock, Geo. Bridgewater	Smith, William, Norwich
Metcalfe, Philip, Plympton	Pole, Sir Ch. Morice, Bt. Newark	Smith, William, Westmeath Co.
Metcalfe, Sir Tho. Theophilus, Bt. Abingdon	Pole, Hon. Wm. Wellesley, Queen's County	Smith, Sir Wm. Sidney, Knt.
Middleton, Wm. Ipswich	Ponsonby, Geo. Wicklow County	K. C. Rochester
Milbanke, Sir Ralph, Bt. Durham Co.	Ponsonby, Rt. Hon. Wm. Brabazon, Kilkenny County	Smyth, Rt. Hon. Jno. Pontefract
Mildmay, Sir H. P. S. Bt. Winchester	Porch, Josiah Dupré, Bodmyn	Sneyd, Nathaniel, Cavan County
Milford, Lord, Pembrokehire	Porchester, Lord, Criclade	Somersett, Rt. Hon. Lord Charles Henry, Monmouth
Mills, Charles, Warwick	Porter, Geo. Stockbridge	Somerville, Sir M. Bt. Meath County
Milner, Sir W. M. Bt. York	Portman, Ed. Berk. Boroughbridge	Spencer, Lord F. A. Oxfordshire
Milnes, James, Blechingley	Poyntz, Wm. Steph. St. Alban's	Spencer, Hon. John, Wilton
Mitford, Wm. Beeralston	Præd, William, St. Ives	Spencer, Lord Robt. Tavistock
Moffatt, Wm. Wincelsea	Preston, Sir Robt. Bt. Cirencester	Stanhope, W. Spencer, Carlisle
Moncton, Hon. Edw. Stafford	Price, Charles, London	Staniforth, Jno. Kingston-on-Hull
Montagu, Lord Fr. Huntingdonsh.	Price, Richard, New Radnor	Stanley, Lord, Preston
Montgomery, Jas. jun. Peeblesh.	Prinsep, John, Queenborough	Stanley, Thomas, Lancashire
Moore, Charles, Heytesbury	Proby, Visc. Buckingham	Steele, Robt. Weobly
Moore, Geo. Pet. Queensborough	Pulleney, Sir Js. Bt. Weymouth, &c.	Steele, Rt. Hon. Tho. Chichester
Moore, Peter, Coventry	Pulleney, Sir Wm. Bt. Shrewsbury	Stephens, Sir Ph. Bt. Sandwich
Morgan, Rt. Hon. Sir Chas. Bt. Breconshire	Pytches, John, Sudbury	Steward, Gab. Tucker, Weymouth, &c.
Morgan, Chas. Monmouthshire	Rain, Jonathan, St. Ives	Stewart, Hon. Cs. Londonderry Co.
Morland, William, Taunton	Ram, Abel, Wexford County	Stewart, Sir Jas. Bt. Donegal Co.
Morpeth, Viscount, Morpeth	Ridley, Sir Matthew White, Bt. Newcastle-on-Tyne	Stewart, Jas. Tyrone County
Morris, Edw. Newport, Cornwall	Roberts, Abraham, Worcester	Stewart, Rt. Hon. Sir John, Bt. Tyrone County
Mostyn, Sir Tho. Bt. Flintshire	Robinson, John, Bishop's Castle	Stewart, Hon. Montgomery, Kircudbright
Mundy, Ed. Miller, Derbyshire	Rochford, Gustavus, Westmeath Co.	Stewart, Hon. Wm. Stranraer, &c.
Nepean, Sir Evan, Bt. Bridport	Rooke, James, Monmouthshire	Stopford, Visc. Annau, &c.
Neville, Rich. Wexford Town	Rose, Rt. Hon. Geo. Christchurch	Strachey, Sir Hen. Bt. Ea. Grinstead
Newborough, Lord Beaumaris	Rose, Geo. Henry, Southampton	Strahan, Andrew, Wareham
Newcomen, Hon. T. G. Longford County	Ross, Sir Chas. Bt. Rosshire	Strange, James, Okehampton
Nicholl, Sir John, Knt. Penryn	Ross, Patric, Horsham	Strutt, Joseph Holden, Malden
Noel, Gerard Noel, Rutland	Rowley, Sam. Camp. Kinsale Town	Stuart, Lord Wm. Cardiff
North, Dudley, Banbury	Russell, Matthew, Saltash	Stuart-Wortley, James Archibald, Bossiney
Northey, Wm. Newport, Cornwall	Russell, Lord Wm. Surrey	
Norton, Hon. J. Chapple, Guilford	Rutherford, John, Selkirkshire	

Stuart, Sir Jno. Br. Kincardineshire
 Sturges, William, Christchurch
 Sudley, Visc. Donegall County
 Sullivan, John, Aldborough
 Sullivan, Rd. Joseph, Seaford
 Sutton, Geo. Bramber
 Sutton, Sir Thos. Manners, Knt.
 Newark
 Sykes, Sir Fran. Bt. Wallingford
 Symonds, Tho. Powell, Hereford
 Tarleton Banastre, Liverpool
 Taylor, Chas. Wm. Wells
 Temple, Earl, Bucks
 Templetown, Ld. St. Edmundsbury
 Thellusson, Chas. Evesham
 Thellusson, Pet. Isaac, Castle Rising
 Thomas, Geo. White, Chichester
 Thornton, Henry, Southwark
 Thornton, Robt. Colchester
 Thornton, Sam. Kingston-on-Hull
 Thornton, Tbos. Grantham
 Thynne, Lord Geo. Weobly
 Thynne, Lord John, Bath
 Tierney, Rt. Hon. Geo. Southwark
 Titchfield, Marquis of, Bucks
 Tottenham, Cha. jun. New Ross
 Townshend, Ld. Jno. Knaresboro'
 Townshend, Hon. Wm. Aug.
 Whitchurch
 Trail, James, Orford

Trevanion, John, Dover
 Troughbridge, Sir Thos. Bt. Yar-
 mouth, Norf.
 Tudway, Clement, Wells
 Turner, Edm. jun. Midhurst
 Turner, Sir G. Page, Bt. Thirsk
 Tyrwhitt Drake, Thos. Drake,
 Agmondesham
 Tyrwhitt, Thos. Portarlington
 Vansittart, Geo. Berkshire
 Vansittart, Nicolas, Old Sarum
 Vaughan, Hon. John, Cardigan
 Vaughan, Sir Robt. Williams, Bt.
 Merionethshire
 Vereker, Chas. Limeric City
 Villiers, Rt. Hn. Jn. C. Dornoc, &c.
 Wallace, Rt. Hon. Tho. Hindon
 Walpole, Hon. Geo. Derby
 Walpole, Hon. Horatio, King's Lyn
 Walsh, John Benn, Blechingly
 Ward, Hon. Jn. Wm. Worcestersh.
 Ward, Robt. Cokermonth
 Warren, Rt. Hon. Sir John Borlase,
 Bt. K. B. & K. C. Nottingham
 Watson, Hon. Geo. Canterbury
 Welby, Sir W. Earle, Bt. Grantham
 West, Hon. Frederic, Denbigh
 Western, Ch. Callis, Malden
 Wharton, John, Beverley
 Wharton, Rich. Durham City
 Whitbread, Samuel, Bedford

White, Matthew, Hyde
 Whitmore, John, Bridgenorth
 Wickham, Rt. Hon. Wm. Cashell
 Wigram, Robt. Fowey
 Wilberforce, Wm. Yorkshire
 Wilkins, Walter, Radnorshire
 Willett, John Wille, New Romney
 Williams, Jn. Haml. Carmarthensh.
 Williams, John, Windsor
 Williams, Owen, Marlow
 Williams, Sir Robt. Bt. Carnarvonsh.
 Williams, Robt. Wootton Bassett
 Williams, Watkin, Flint
 Windham, Rt. Hon. W. St. Mawes
 Winnington, Sir Ed. Bt. Droitwich
 Wood, Geo. Haslemere
 Wood, Mark, Gatton
 Worcester, Marq. of, Gloucestersh
 Wright, John Atkyns, Oxford City.
 Wrottesley, Sir Jno. Bt. Lichfield
 Wyndham, Hen. Penn. Wiltshire
 Wyndham, Thos. Glamorgansh.
 Wynne, Chas. Watkin Williams,
 Montgomeryshire
 Wynne, Owen, Sligo Borough
 Wynne, Sir Wat. W. Bt. Denbighsh.
 Yarmouth, Earl of, Lisburne
 Yorke, Hon. Jos. Sid. Reigate
 Yorke, Rt. Hon. Cha. Cambridgesh.
 Young, Sir Wm. Bt. St. Mawes

LIST OF HIS MAJESTY'S CABINET MINISTERS AT THE OPENING OF THE SESSION.

Cabinet Ministers.

Duke of Portland	President of the Council.
Lord Eldon	Lord High Chancellor.
Lord Westmoreland	Lord Privy Seal.
Right Hon. Henry Addington	First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. (Prime Minister.)
Earl St. Vincent.....	First Lord of the Admiralty.
Earl of Chatham.....	Master General of the Ordnance.
Right Hon. Charles Yorke	Secretary of State for the Home Department.
Lord Hawkesbury.....	Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
Lord Hobart	Secretary of State for the Department of War and the Colonies.
Lord Viscount Castlereagh	President of the Board of Controul for the Affairs of India.

Not of the Cabinet.

Right Hon. Charles Bragge.....	Secretary at War.
Right Hon. George Tierney	Treasurer of the Navy.
Right Hon. Thomas Steele	} Joint Paymaster of his Majesty's Forces.
Right Hon. J. Hiley Addington }	
Lord Auckland	} Joint Postmaster General.
Lord Charles Spencer	
Nicholas Vansittart, Esq.	} Secretaries of the Treasury.
John Sargent, Esq.	
Sir William Grant.....	Master of the Rolls.
Hon. Spencer Perceval.....	Attorney General.
Sir Thomas Mannors Sutton.....	Solicitor General.

PERSONS IN THE MINISTRY OF IRELAND.

Earl of Hardwicke.....	Lord Lieutenant.
Lord Redesdale	Lord High Chancellor.
Right Hon. W. Wickham.....	Chief Secretary.
Right Hon. Isaac Corry	Chancellor of the Exchequer.

THE Parliamentary Debates

During the Second Session of the Second Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great-Britain and Ireland, and of the Kingdom of Great-Britain the Nineteenth, appointed to meet at Westminster, the Sixth Day of October, 1803, and from thence continued, by several Prorogations, to the Twenty-second Day of November, in the Forty-fourth Year of the Reign of King GEORGE the Third, Annoque Domini, 1803.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

November 22, 1803.

This day, at a quarter past three o'clock, his Majesty came down to the House of Peers in the accustomed state, and being seated in his royal robes upon the throne, Mr. Quarme, the Deputy Usher of the Black Rod, was dispatched with a message from his Majesty, commanding the attendance of the House of Commons, who forthwith appeared at the bar, with the Speaker at their head. His Majesty was then pleased to deliver the following most gracious speech from the throne.

"My Lords and Gentlemen,

Since I last met you in Parliament, it has been my chief object to carry into effect those measures which your wisdom had adopted for the defence of the United Kingdom, and for the vigorous prosecution of the war. In these preparations I have been seconded by the voluntary exertions of all ranks of my people, in a manner that has, if possible strengthened their claims to my confidence and affection; they have proved that the menaces of the enemy have only served to rouse their native and hereditary spirit; and that all other considerations are lost in a general disposition to make those efforts and sacrifices which the honour and safety of the Kingdom demand at this important and critical conjuncture. — Though my attention has principally been directed to the great object of internal security, no opportunity has been lost of making an impression on the foreign possessions of the enemy. The Islands of St. Lucia, of Tobago, of St. Pierre, and Miquelon, and the settlements of Demerara and Essequibo,

have surrendered to the British arms. In the conduct of the operations by which those valuable acquisitions have been made, the utmost promptitude and zeal have been displayed by the officers employed on those services, and by my forces acting under their command by sea and land. — In Ireland, the leaders, and several inferior agents, in the late traitorous and atrocious conspiracy, have been brought to justice; and the public tranquillity has experienced no further interruption. I indulge the hope that such of my deluded subjects as have swerved from their allegiance are now convinced of their error; and that having compared the advantages they derive from the protection of a free Constitution, with the condition of those countries which are under the dominion of the French Government, they will cordially and zealously concur in resisting any attempt that may be made against the security and independence of my United Kingdom.

"Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

I have a perfect reliance on your public spirit for making such provision as may be necessary for the service of the year. The progressive improvement of the revenue cannot fail to encourage you to persevere in the system which has been adopted, of defraying the expenses of the war, with as little addition as possible to the public debt, and to the permanent burthens of the State. — I lament the heavy pressure which, under the present circumstances, must unavoidably be experienced by my people; but I am persuaded that they will meet it with the good sense and fortitude which so eminently distinguish their character, under a conviction of the indispensable importance

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of upholding the dignity, and of providing effectually for the safety of the Empire.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

I have concluded a convention with the King of Sweden, for the purpose of adjusting all the differences which have arisen on the subject of the eleventh article of the treaty of 1661. I have directed that a copy of this convention should be laid before you, and you will, I trust, be of opinion that the arrangement, whilst it upholds our maritime rights, is founded on those principles of reciprocal advantage which are best calculated to maintain and improve the good understanding which happily subsists between the two countries.—In the prosecution of the contest in which we are engaged, it shall be, as it ever has been, my first object to execute as becomes me, the great trust committed to my charge. Embarked with my brave and loyal people in one common cause, it is my fixed determination, if the occasion should arise, to share their exertions and their dangers in the defence of our constitution, our religion, our laws, and independence. To the activity and valour of my fleets and armies, to the zeal and unconquerable spirit of my faithful subjects, I confide—the honour of my crown, and all those valuable interests which are involved in the issue of this momentous contest.—Actuated by these sentiments, and humbly imploring the blessing of Divine Providence, I look forward with a firm conviction, that if, contrary to all just expectation, the enemy should elude the vigilance of my numerous fleets and cruisers, and attempt to execute their presumptuous threat of invading our coasts, the consequence will be to them discomfiture, confusion, and disgrace; and that our's will not only be the glory of surmounting present difficulties, and repelling immediate danger, but the solid and permanent advantage of fixing the safety and independence of the kingdom on the basis of acknowledged strength, the result of its own tried energy and resources."

After his Majesty had left the House, Lord Hawkesbury was introduced by the Earl Marshal and Lord Great Chamberlain in their robes, between Lords Hobart and Auckland, on being created Baron Hawkesbury, and took the oaths and his seat in the House. Lord Westmoreland then moved the first reading of a bill, according to ancient usage, before they proceeded to take into consideration his Majesty's speech. Their Lordships then adjourned during pleasure. After a short interval, the House

was resumed, and his Majesty's speech was read, first by the Lord Chancellor, and afterwards by the Clerk at the table.

The *Marquis of Sligo* then rose to move an Address to his Majesty, on his most gracious speech from the throne, which their Lordships had just heard read, and spoke as follows: My Lords—In calling your Lordships' attention to the speech which has been delivered from the throne, I trust I shall not be considered as arrogating to myself an extraordinary claim to your consideration. Little in the habit of addressing you on such occasions, and not, perhaps, suited to it on any, I shall require much of your indulgence, while I endeavour to express those sentiments to which that speech has given rise; though I am persuaded I feel them only in common with your Lordships, and with all those who have had the opportunity of attending to it. The importance of perfect unanimity at this moment, I feel most strongly, and I trust nothing will fall from me to stand in the way of that most desirable object. We must recollect that we have to contend with an overbearing and vindictive enemy, avowing, as his object, our destruction, and one who we know, by the melancholy experience of Europe, will stop at no means to effect his purposes. If ever there was a period of more importance in the annals of history than another, this is the period. If ever there was a moment of peculiar pride in the name of Britain, more than another, it is at the present moment. If ever there was a period when this nation, long the envy and admiration of the world, could more properly be looked up to for imitation, it is now, when, every individual born to the protection of equal laws, stands forward, without distinction of rank, class, or situation, to shed his blood in defence of that invaluable inheritance. The measures which the prudence of his Majesty's ministers has suggested for the defence of the empire, and which the wisdom of Parliament has adopted, have been outdone by the zeal and patriotism of its inhabitants, and Great-Britain offers itself to the admiration of the world in a novel attitude, a nation of soldiers, not brought together by the terrors of revolutionary laws, not assembled by the unbridled power of a despotic government, not invited by the hopes of plunder, from the destruction of neighbouring nations, but voluntarily stepping forth on the noblest and wisest principles, the possession of an unequalled form of government; a proper sense of its value, and a determination to die in its defence.—France, assisted in her views upon other

nations, by their internal dissensions, may have the same expectation here, but she will find, that, however the wisest may differ in political opinions, or however we may be divided in another part of the United Empire by distinctions of religion, there are points and principles in which we shall be actuated by one mind; we will not be invaded by a foreign enemy; we will not be dictated to by any one: we will live as an independent people, as our forefathers have done, or we will not live at all.—But, though much of the attention of the King's ministers must have been bestowed on our extensive preparations for home defence, their labours have not been confined to that only. Enterprizes for conquests abroad have been planned, and several colonies of considerable commercial value wrested from the enemy and added to the dominions of Great Britain, opening new markets for our manufactures, and, at the same time, cutting off the last remnant of foreign trade from France. She is effectually deprived of the means for the restoration of her naval power, the remnant of which, still smarting under the recollection of former defeats, confined to her own harbours, remains blockaded in one of her naval arsenals by the persevering vigilance of Admiral Cornwallis, and in the other, by a noble admiral, with whose exploits in the same quarter, she has had some former acquaintance.—With respect to the recent events which have taken place in Ireland, I can address your lordships on that subject with a considerable degree of confidence, having been there previous to the breaking out of the insurrection, pending it, and for many months after it was put down. A conspiracy, fomented by the intrigues of France, was formed, having for its avowed object the overthrow of the government. The energy, the firmness, the vigilance, and the moderation with which it was followed up by the King's servants there, gave universal satisfaction to all the loyal inhabitants. It was traced to its very source: not only every ring-leader, but also every conspicuous person concerned in it, was discovered and brought to punishment, after being allowed the fullest benefit of those mild, just, and lenient laws, which, in their madness, they wished to have overturned. I will also further assure your Lordships, that French fraternization is now appreciated in Ireland, at its just value, and if, by the misinformation of their emissaries, the enemy should direct their meditated attack to that quarter, they will find, I here pledge myself to your Lordships, a vigorous resistance from every rank and every persua-

sion of the inhabitants.—A continued perseverance in the wise system of defraying the weighty charge of war, with the least possible permanent burthen on the public, cannot be too much commended. It is by that only our national credit can be preserved, and that France will learn, that the plans she may have formed for exhausting our resources, are as vain as any others she may have in view for our destruction.—With respect to the convention concluded with the King of Sweden, when the papers on that subject are before your Lordships will be the properest time for examining the merits of that convention; I will, however, take leave to say now thus much: in all I have seen, and all I have read, treaties between independent nations are lasting and beneficial, in proportion as they convey equal and reciprocal advantage to both parties: if, therefore, our just rights are obtained, and all indispensably necessary to us is secured, without infringing on the rights of another independent kingdom, all that could be wished for is accomplished.—I come now, my Lords, to the concluding paragraph of the speech; in which his Majesty, in language never to be forgotten, declares, that, embarked in one common cause, with his brave and loyal people, he confides to them the honour of his crown, determined in his own person to share with them their exertions and their dangers. The feelings to which such sentiments give rise, it would not be easy to express; I could dwell on them with pride and pleasure; but I have trespassed already too much on your Lordships' indulgence, and, in truth, I have nearly exhausted my own strength, and, therefore, though I could have wished to have added a few words more, I must conclude with a fervent prayer, that the beloved Sovereign, who has reigned in the love and admiration of his subjects for nearly half a century, may long continue to fill that throne! Whatever calamities hang over us, may danger be far from him! And, when taken from us to another and a better world, may the remembrance of his unexampled virtues be lastingly impressed on his successors, as the highest ornament to this nation in its prosperity, and the best pledge to it for the Divine aid, under any of those dangers or calamities from which nothing human is exempted.—His Lordship then moved, "That an humble address be presented to his Majesty," which address was as usual, an echo of the speech from the throne, and nearly the same as that which we insert in the proceedings of the House of Commons of this day. (See page 15.)

The *Earl of Limerick* rose to second the Address. Though he fully coincided in the sentiments expressed by the noble Marquis who had just sat down, yet he hoped the House would pardon him, if he felt it necessary to trespass upon their patience, by a few observations upon the speech itself. Their Lordships would observe, that in the subject at present before them, no questions were involved, as to the fitness or unfitness of ministers for the councils of their Sovereign; the topics before them were not matters of party consideration; they were of a comprehensive, general and important kind, and presented themselves to the attention of their Lordships in such a point of view, as induced him to trouble them with a very few observations thereon. The opening part of the speech from the throne, very properly adverted to that impregnable state of protection, which the unprecedented vigour, energy, and unanimity of the population of the country held forth to an aggressive and unprincipled foe. This was such, (and it was with exultation he had to remark it,) as must make the enemy ever feel what he had to expect, in case he should provoke, by an attack upon its territory, the just vengeance of a nation, armed in defence of its independence, its liberties, and its invaluable constitution. A voluntary armament like the present could not be paralleled in the history of any country; not only with respect to the amount of numbers, but in the instance of the sense, nay, the feelings of the people being so clearly and forcibly expressed. As danger threatened, our spirits had increased; and never had energy more conspicuously distinguished any nation, even during the most arduous emergencies, than in the present contest. He was confident, that should the opportunity offer, of those patriotic bands signalizing themselves in action, they would evince themselves the genuine descendants of those who had so gloriously carried the terrors of the British arms into the heart of France, and bore away the palm of signal and complete victory at Cressy and Poitiers. When had there such a number of voluntary defenders stepped forward to vindicate the cause of their country? If he was rightly informed, there was at least half a million of men in arms, prepared and eager to meet the boasting foe. Indeed the country appeared to him as one vast camp, filled by armed myriads, who, instead of feeling a particle of dismay or apprehension, instead of evincing themselves a "nation of shopkeepers" as they had been tauntingly called by the enemy, ardently wished for nothing

so much as to be brought to the test of action. When we come to cope with our enemy in war, we displayed the same superiority, as when we contended with other traders in mercantile effort. We were not mere merchants who could traffic, but could not fight; not mere soldiers who could fight, without excelling in other arts; but in whatever we undertook we were superior. Greatly as he admired the volunteer corps, yet, there was one circumstance which he wished to see different from what it now was; he wished that every corps of that kind, and also the militia, should have been engaged to serve in any part of the United Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, where occasion might require a large portion of the national force: not only that the volunteers and militia should march to their own coasts, but also to the sister island, reciprocally and respectively, if they be wanted. Meritorious as were their services, and momentous, even under the present tenure, yet he thought they would be still more valuable, if they were more extensive as to place; and he wished a clause to that effect had been introduced into that part of the defensive system, which recommended the formation of volunteer corps. With such a numerous and effectual force, some persons asked, why were our operations almost entirely defensive? Why did we make no attempt at offensive efforts? Our first and grand object was defence; the defence of our king, country, constitution, laws, religion, property, families, liberty, and lives, from the most cruel enemy that had ever annoyed the human race; and who was inflamed with peculiar hatred against this country, which alone had effectually resisted and repressed his lawless ambition. Unless we had made defence our principal and almost sole object, we could not have provided for our security and independence. Even now, though we had in a great measure ascertained our security by our strength, the vigilant hatred of our enemy would admit of no relaxation of our defensive exertions. He trusted, however, that in a short time we should be so secure, in point of defence, as to admit of offensive warfare. He could not withhold his just tribute of praise from that respectable board, to whose department more particularly belongs the arming of the troops and volunteer force of the country, for their almost miraculous exertions, within the short period of a few months, which had enabled them to issue, if he was rightly informed, above 300,000 stand of arms. Such exertions, though they merited peculiar com-

mendation, were only, he was well assured, a specimen of the vigour and alacrity which universally pervaded every department connected with the public force.—The next point of the speech to which he would advert, was that in which his Majesty stated, that while every exertion was directed in the first instance, to provide for our internal safety at home, yet his arms abroad had been directed to the attainment of new and important acquisitions of territory in the West-Indies. To the wisdom of such conduct, every praise was due. Until our security at home should be placed out of all possible risk, it would be quixotism to direct our arms to projects of foreign conquest; but that security once effected, it became the wisdom and vigour of his Majesty's councils to seek every means of annoying the enemy abroad; and the new acquisitions in the West Indies his lordship hailed as an omen of new triumphs to our arms, to which, the state of forwardness in number and equipment of our public force, unparalleled at so early a period of the war, must enable us speedily to make many valuable additions.—His lordship next adverted to that part of his Majesty's speech which alludes to the concerns of Ireland. He had on a former occasion, feelingly to lament, the misfortunes which had then arisen in that part of the United Kingdom: with respect to these on the present view of that subject, much matter for satisfactory consideration was afforded; the principal leaders in that wicked and flagitious insurrection had since met that fate they so justly deserved. The numbers of those who were embarked in that wretched cause, were certainly contemptible; yet their attempts were matter for precautionary consideration. He had, since the period alluded to, resided in Ireland, and had taken some pains to be correctly informed upon the subject; he had reason to think, that several of those who were deeply engaged in traitorous machinations against the constitution and unity of these kingdoms, differed materially among themselves as to the plan most expedient to be pursued. Some urged the expediency of an immediate rising, while others preferred waiting for the assistance or co-operation of France. The explosion, therefore, had prematurely broken forth. He sincerely wished, however, that the hopes held out in the speech that those who had been unhappily misled into the paths of treason and rebellion, would by comparing the effects of that mild and lenient system of government under which they had the good fortune to live,

with those of that tyrannical and unprincipled usurpation to which they were about to commit their country, would be induced to return to their allegiance, and to habits of tranquillity. Added to this consideration he trusted the disaffected in that country, would be kept down by the strength and vigilance of the Irish Volunteer force. Of that body of men he could speak in terms of well-founded panegyric: he had seen them, and steadier and better disciplined troops were no where to be found: they were confidently to be relied upon: it was not for review and parade alone, that they were calculated, they had been weighed in the balance of actual service, and proved themselves not to be deficient. Here the noble earl adverted to the militia force of the United Kingdom, and avowed himself convinced, as he had done on a former occasion, of the superior policy of reciprocal service. After viewing the effects of the militia system as it now stood, he expressed his wish that these forces, of every part of the United Kingdom, were enabled by law reciprocally to volunteer their services. With respect to the militia of Ireland, he argued for the superior policy of employing them partially, at least, in this country. Such a measure would be, he seemed to think, in strict consonance with the spirit of the union. There might exist an aversion on the part of the English and Scotch militia to crossing the sea; but he repeated his opinion, that with respect to the Irish militia, they would, if brought to this country, behave as well as any troops possibly could.—His lordship then entered upon the consideration of the remaining topics of his Majesty's speech. In regard to the pecuniary part of it, he must anticipate the most perfect unanimity, with respect to the affording the necessary supplies under the present circumstances.—In regard to the convention lately entered into with the King of Sweden, it had his hearty approbation, conceiving it was grounded on principles, which would tend to do away those embarrassments which heretofore obtained on the trade of the respective countries; and, further, he was of opinion, it would have the desirable operation of counteracting the effects of the armed neutrality. In former contests, Great Britain had been greatly annoyed by disputes about the maritime law, and the rights of neutral nations trading with belligerent powers; but this convention adjusted every difference that had arisen, concerning the interpretation of the treaty which defined our maritime right in these cases.—He had to apologize to their

lordships for trespassing so much upon their attention. Yet, there was one other point, respecting which he could not possibly refrain from offering a word or two; namely, that part of his Majesty's most gracious speech, wherein he expressed his determination personally to come forward in defence of the honour of his crown, and the liberties and independence of his faithful people. To a communication of this nature, he trusted there was no heart so cold, or feelings so deadened, as not to be responsive to the intimation, or feelingly to appreciate, in its full extent, its magnitude and importance. Well may his Majesty rely upon the zeal and services of his people. Should such a contingency ever arise the whole population of the island would rush forward and interpose its myriads between his sacred person and danger; though an attack should be made by hosts gorged with spoils and blood of Europe, the result would be, not only security, but triumph to our beloved Sovereign and those who have the happiness to live under his auspicious government. Upon the whole, he was induced to think, that, from the present favourable appearance of the national affairs and the system adopted by government, that such effects would ensue as must tend to the establishment of a real, permanent, and honourable peace, because founded on the genuine balance of power in Europe, and duly regarding the liberties and independence of the various states concerned, and above all, on the broad principle of reciprocity of benefit and advantage. The noble earl concluded with expressing his hearty concurrence with the address.—The question was put, and the address was immediately voted *nem. diss.*—A committee of their lordships then retired formally to prepare the address, and on their return the Marquis of Sligo reported from the same, when the House ordered, that the lords with white staves should wait upon his Majesty to-morrow with the said address.

[COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES.]—Lord *Hawkesbury* moved that Lord *Walsingham* be appointed chairman of the committee of privileges for the present session.

The *Lord Chancellor*, in seconding the motion, took an opportunity to pay an handsome compliment to the talents and assiduity which the noble lord, who was the subject of the motion, had displayed during so long a period, in his official capacity of chairman of their lordships' committees.—The question was put, and the appointment forthwith ordered by their lordships, *nem. diss.*

Lord *Walsingham* then rose, and observed, that he was not in the habit of trespassing upon the attention, or taking up the valuable time of their lordships; but, after what had just fallen from the noble and learned lord on the woolsack, he could not avoid saying a word or two on the occasion. He had to return his thanks to the House for this additional manifestation of their lordships' favourable opinion of his official conduct, he trusted he should persevere in that line of conduct which had met their lordships' approbation, which principally consisted in a strict and uniform adherence to the rules and orders of the House, without which the business could not be conducted duly to the honour of the House, or to the advantage of the public.—It was then ordered on the motion of Lord *Hawkesbury*, that Lord *Walsingham* be appointed chairman of the committees of their lordships' House, except in cases where it shall be otherwise directed; and also that his lordship be appointed chairman of the private committees during the present session.—The usual order respecting the committee of privileges was then made, on the motion of Lord *Walsingham*; as were the several routine orders usually made at the commencement of a session; after which their lordships adjourned till to-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, November 22.

The House met this day, pursuant to his Majesty's proclamation, for the dispatch of public business. About three o'clock the Deputy Usher of the Black Rod appeared within the bar, and delivered a message from the Lords desiring the attendance of the House in the House of Peers to hear the speech from the Throne. The Speaker, accompanied by the members present, accordingly attended, in obedience to his Majesty's command. On their return, the Speaker took the chair, and acquainted the House, that, by virtue of the acts, authorising him so to do, he had issued his warrant to the Clerk of the Crown, directing him to make out a new writ for the election of a member to serve in parliament for the borough of Yarmouth, in the County of Southampton, in the room of J. Murray, Esq., deceased; and also another for the County of Gloucester, in the room of the Marquis of Worcester, called to the House of Peers.—Seven members were introduced, and took the usual oaths and their seats; among whom were Mr. *Yorke*, Mr. *Bragge*, and

Mr. Tyrwhitt Jones.—The Speaker informed the House, that the clerk had, according to custom, prepared a bill for preventing clandestine outlawries. The bill was brought up and read a first and second time.

[*KING'S SPEECH.*]—The *Speaker* acquainted the House that the House had, in obedience to his Majesty's command, attended in the House of Peers, to hear his Majesty's most gracious Speech from the Throne; of which, to prevent mistakes, he had himself obtained a copy. He then proceeded to read the Speech from the chair, for which we refer to our account of the proceedings of the Lords. (See p. 1.) After the Speaker had finished reading the Speech,

The Hon. *Cropley Ashley* rose and spoke as follows. Sir, after having heard the sentiments expressed, and the statements contained in the Speech which has just now been read, it cannot appear out of season for me to congratulate the House on the state of the country as described in that Speech. The spirit, zeal, and unanimity of all classes, and the voluntary exertions of every branch of the community, are unexampled in the annals of any country, and have so effectually provided for the defence and security of the kingdom, as to set all attempts of the enemy to make any impression on our coasts at defiance. I congratulate this House and the nation in general, that the prosperous state of our manufactures, and the great improvement of the public revenue, will enable the government to adhere to that excellent system of carrying on the war without any material addition to the permanent debt of the nation; a system which, if closely pursued, will infallibly disappoint the hopes of our foe, and render abortive every attempt of the enemy to destroy this country by delay, and to keep it in a constant state of alarm.—From the exertions that every where appear around us, I think the country is in a situation of the greatest security; and it is with conscious pride I have observed, that notwithstanding the extensive and vigorous system of internal defence that has been adopted, our arms have been carried abroad, against the foreign possessions of the enemy. The valuable islands of St. Lucia, Tobago, St. Pierre, and Miquelon, and the settlements of Demerara and Essequibo, have been added to the British empire. The vigilance and wisdom of the administration which planned the expeditions against them, and the zeal, bravery, and spirit of the forces, by which such va-

luable acquisitions have been made, are entitled to the gratitude and acknowledgments of the country. In the short space of four months such advantages have been gained, as, in every former war, would have been reckoned glorious achievements for a whole campaign.—It is with the highest satisfaction I learn that a convention has been concluded with Sweden, founded on the firmest basis of all treaties, the reciprocal advantage of both the contracting parties.—It is also matter of satisfaction and congratulation to know that the affairs of Ireland now appear to wear a favourable aspect, and that the change has been brought about, without the necessity of employing those extraordinary means, which the difficulties of the times render it indispensably necessary to place in the hands of the Irish government. Such conduct must necessarily impress the deluded insurgents of that country, with a just sense of the blessings of the happy constitution, which it was the object of their wishes to destroy. The impartiality and regard to public justice with which the several trials of the persons engaged in the rebellion, have been conducted, reflects the highest honour on those to whom the administration of the affairs of Ireland have been committed, and entitles them to the respect and gratitude of the country. His Majesty has expressed his hope, that such of his deluded subjects as have swerved from their allegiance are now convinced of their error, and that having compared the advantages they derive from the protection of a free constitution, with the condition of those countries which are under the dominion of the French government, they will cordially and zealously concur in resisting any attempt that may be made against the security and independence of the United Kingdom. If after such a comparison, any man can be backward or lukewarm in the cause of his country, let him call to his recollection the example of his Majesty, whose whole life has been devoted to the improvement and advantage of his subjects, and who has this day come forward and declared to his people his determination, to share with them the danger and the toil. This is not a war merely for military glory, for extended dominion, or for powerful allies; but a war forced upon us by an insolent foe, in defence of the constitution, the laws, the religion of this kingdom; in defence of every thing dear and valuable to a people. Our conduct this night, will, I trust, shew, that whatever may be the differences which prevail amongst us in other respects, it is

our unanimous resolution to stand firm in the defence of our Sovereign, and of our own civil and religious privileges. This is a resolution worthy of a free and generous people, fully sensible of the distinguished blessings which they enjoy; a people magnanimous enough to drop all party interests, when the welfare and security of the nation is at stake. I therefore beg leave to move, "That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty.—To return his Majesty the thanks of this house for his most gracious speech from the throne.—To assure his Majesty that this house is deeply sensible of his Majesty's paternal care and attention to the safety and interests of his faithful people, in carrying into effect such measures as Parliament has adopted for the defence of the United Kingdom, and the vigorous prosecution of the war.—That it is highly gratifying to this house to reflect, that in those preparations his Majesty has been seconded by the voluntary exertions of all ranks of his people, in a manner which his Majesty has been most graciously pleased to declare, has, if possible, strengthened their claims to his confidence and affection.—That they feel with just exultation, that the measures of the enemy have only served to rouse the native and hereditary spirit of the nation; and that all other considerations are lost in a general disposition to make those efforts and sacrifices which the honour and safety of the kingdom demand at this important and critical conjuncture. — They beg leave humbly to congratulate his Majesty on the impression which, notwithstanding the necessity of principally attending to the great object of internal security, has been made on the foreign possessions of the enemy, by the capture of the Islands of St. Lucia, Tobago, St. Pierre, and Miquelon, and of the Settlements of Demerara and Essequibo; and they are fully sensible of the promptitude and zeal displayed by the Officers employed in the conduct of the operations, by which those valuable acquisitions have been made, and by the forces acting under their command by sea and land.—That they have great satisfaction in reflecting that the leaders, and several of the inferior agents in the late traitorous and atrocious conspiracy in Ireland, have been brought to justice, and that the public tranquillity has experienced no further interruption; and they earnestly participate in the hope which his Majesty has so graciously expressed, that such of his deluded subjects as have swerved from their allegiance are now convinced of their error; and, comparing the advantages they enjoy under the protection of a free constitution,

with the condition of the countries under the dominion of the French Government, they will cordially and zealously concur in resisting any attempt that may be made against the security and independence of the United Kingdom. — They assure his Majesty that he may rely on the readiness of his faithful Commons, to make such provision as may be necessary for the service of the year, and that they are fully sensible of the importance of persevering in the system which has been adopted, of defraying the expenses of the war with as little addition as possible to the public debt, and to the permanent burthens of the state.—They feel a perfect confidence that their fellow-subjects will meet with fortitude, the pressure which the present situation of the country renders unavoidable, under a conviction of the indispensable importance of upholding the dignity, and of providing effectually for the safety of the empire.—They return their thanks to his Majesty, for his gracious intention of laying before them the Convention which his Majesty has concluded with the King of Sweden, for the purpose of adjusting the differences which have arisen on the subject of the 11th Article of the Treaty of 1661; and they trust that it will be found at once to uphold our maritime rights, and to produce the effect of maintaining and improving the good understanding which happily subsists between the two countries. —That they are most deeply convinced that it will be, as it ever has been, his Majesty's first object to execute, as becomes his royal dignity, the great trust with which he is invested; and they receive with the strongest feelings of veneration and dutiful attachment the expression of those paternal sentiments which induce his Majesty to consider himself as embarked in one common cause with his people, and which have determined his Majesty, if the occasion should arise, to share their exertions and their dangers in the defence of our constitution, our religion, our laws, and independence.—They beg leave humbly to assure his Majesty, that these sentiments will not be lost on an affectionate and grateful people, but will animate and invigorate the activity and valour of his fleets and armies, and the zeal and determination of his faithful subjects, to which his Majesty, under the protection of Divine Providence, may safely confide the honour of his crown and all those important interests which are involved in the issue of this momentous contest.—Partaking of these his Majesty's sentiments, and joining with his Majesty in humbly imploring the blessings of Divine

Providence, they look forward with a firm conviction that if, contrary to all just expectation, the enemy should elude the vigilance of his Majesty's fleets and cruizers, and attempt to execute their presumptuous threat of invading the coasts of the United Kingdom, the consequences will be to them discomfiture, confusion and disgrace, and that the exertions of this kingdom will be rewarded, not only by the glory of surmounting present difficulties and repelling immediate danger, but by the solid and permanent advantage of fixing its safety and independence on the basis of acknowledged strength, the result of its own tried energy and resources."

Mr. *Burland*.—Sir, In rising to second the motion of my honourable friend, I find a considerable degree of embarrassment; not proceeding so much from the apprehension of addressing this House, whose indulgence I have before experienced, but from the momentous crisis in which I am permitted to address you. A crisis, Sir, which whether we consider the general situation of the continent of Europe, sunk and depressed as it is by the predominant influence of one power to the rank and level of a petty German State, or whether we consider the particular situation of this kingdom rearing its head above those clouds of anarchy and despotism which have in succession shed their noxious influence on the globe: in whatever light we view it, I believe it is a crisis unparalleled in the history of antient, and I am confident unequalled in that of modern times.—At a period like the present, Sir, when preparations are making, the avowed object of which we know to be the destruction of this country, when even at the moment in which I am now speaking, the meditated attack may possibly have commenced on our coasts, I am sure I need not call upon the members of this House for that unanimity on which our salvation depends. Small indeed, I am well aware, is the influence which any argument of mine would produce, but I rely with confidence on the unanimous vote of the House in support of the motion of my honourable friend, because the experience of the last session of Parliament has taught me, that whatever shades of difference there might be in political opinions on speculative or theoretical points, however gentlemen might disagree in their sentiments of past measures, or of proposed plans of defence, yet, whenever the welfare of the King, the country, or the constitution, was at stake, this House possessed but one opinion and one voice.—Let us, then, at the commencement of a session, during which it is probable the fate of this country will be decided, set an exam-

ple of unanimity to the British empire; let us not by dissensions here paralyze the efforts which a generous and patriotic enthusiasm is making for the preservation of the country.—If, Sir, any argument was necessary in favour of unanimity, from what source could I deduce it better, than from the disunion, the selfish politics, and the lust of partial aggrandizement, which have deluged Europe with blood, and involved the innocent and guilty in one common ruin.—But, Sir, I feel no apprehension of the want of unanimity, either within these walls or without. The moderation which his Majesty invariably shewed throughout the whole of the last war, the disposition which he at all times manifested to conclude a peace on fair and honourable terms, and the opportunity of which he availed himself to accept proposals of peace as soon as they were offered, have convinced the people of the necessity of the present war, and have united them in the prosecution of it. I fear not the want of courage in the people, or of vigour in the Government; but there is a circumstance from which I confess I do entertain some apprehension; because, if the threatened attack is postponed to a more distant period, it may diminish the energy of the people, and may induce them to despise that danger, which I wish them to view alike without contempt or without dismay; it is from that improvident and overweening security which pervades many parts of the country. There is a language which I frequently hear used, which is in my opinion of so pernicious a tendency, that I have always thought it my duty, both as a magistrate and a man, to reprobate and refute it. It is a very common phrase in all parts of the kingdom, to which I think every gentleman who now hears me can bear witness, that our present alarms are imaginary, that Buonaparte is as well convinced of the impossibility of invading this country as we are, that his preparations are only meant to alarm us, and to involve us in a ruinous expense. Now, Sir, if those who hold this language would consider the character of the enemy with whom we are to contend, if they would recollect that he invaded Egypt, and carried his arms further in that country than European troops had ever penetrated before, at a time when he was engaged in a war with all Europe; if they would consider the armament which covers the coast of France from the Texel to the Bay of Biscay; if they would recollect that he has hitherto invariably attempted whatever he has threatened; that humanity, which forms a barrier to the ambition of other men, is no obstacle to his views; that of so small

estimation is life itself in his mind, that the sacrifice of thousands, nay of whole armies, is no impediment to his progress; if they would reflect on these circumstances, I think they could not for a moment doubt, that he will attempt the invasion which he has threatened. What the event of that attempt will be, it is not for human wisdom to foresee, but this it may be fair to predict; that if, like the Swiss, the Dutch, or the Hanoverians, we wait, in a torpid or too confident security, until the enemy is at our gates, we shall share the fate of those unhappy countries; but if, on the contrary, we go forth with the spirits and the souls of Britons, to meet him on our coasts; if we unite with one heart, and one hand, in defence of our country, we shall drive him back, with disgrace and discomfiture, to those who have raised him to the tyranny he usurps; where, like the Arch Fiend of old, he will return to his Pandemonium, and hear,

On all sides, from innumerable tongues,
A dismal, universal hiss—the sound
Of public scorn.

But, Sir, whatever may be the final issue of this contest; however glorious its termination may be to Great Britain, I shall always regret the revolution which it has produced in the manners and constitution of every state in Europe. For, Sir, the habits, perhaps the prejudices of my education, have taught me to look with a jealous eye on every increase of military power: and I grieve to think, that while the military despotism of France exists, every nation must rely for the protection of its liberties, not on its civil constitution, but on its military force. But, Sir, while this evil does exist, for I must call it an evil, though, I admit it to be a necessary evil, I rejoice to see the hands in which arms are placed. I rejoice to see a rank and file of property, I rejoice that arms are intrusted to those who will be induced by interest, as well as by principle, to use them in support of the laws and constitution of their country. Let me, Sir, draw a contrast between the military force of the two nations; in the one I see the wretched conscript dragged in chains to fight the battles of his tyrant; in the other I see free and independent volunteers rushing in such numbers, that it is necessary to restrain their ardour, and impossible to supply all of them with arms, to the defence of whom? Of the father of his people, the King of a free country, of the sovereign who comes

forth on this day, and pledges himself to his people, that, in the hour of peril, he will share their exertions and their dangers with them, in defence of their constitution, in defence of our constitution, in defence of the laws and independence of his dominions.—Sir, I have purposely avoided entering into a detail of the different subjects touched upon in his Majesty's speech, because my hon. friend has dilated upon them in so ample and so clear a manner, that I am apprehensive of weakening the effect of his argument, by endeavouring to illustrate them. Gratitude, however, forbids my passing over in silence, the conduct of the British Navy. Of splendid achievements, indeed, the enemy has given them no opportunity; but the patience and perseverance with which they have continued to block up the ports of France, and the vigilance with which they have watched the motions of the enemy, so that I do not believe the smallest boat has escaped their notice, deserves our highest commendation. The conduct of the hon. Admiral, who commands the Channel fleet, in persevering to hold his station on the coast of France, in defiance of the storms and tempests incident to the season of the year, is above all praise.—I regret, Sir, that I cannot look back to the events which have taken place in Ireland with equal satisfaction. But though the seeds of rebellion have again germinated in that country, yet they have sprung from so weak a root, they have been cultivated by so unskilful a hand, and have been cut down at so early a period, by the vigilance of government, that I would willingly flatter myself the time is approaching when they will be finally eradicated. If, Sir, we may believe the dying declarations of the leaders of the insurrection, even they were not sunk so low, as to wish for a connection with France, or to be insensible to the horrors of French fraternity; and the trials have evinced, that the deluded people who joined them, were influenced more by former engagements, and oaths imposed on them, than by any conviction of the justice or advantage of the cause they espoused.—I have already occupied so much of the time of the house, that I will not enlarge on the wound which we have inflicted on the foreign possessions of the enemy; while we have detained their fleets, blockaded in their own harbours, and scarce suffered a single gun-boat to skulk from port to port. At any other period those conquests would have been considered as an adequate compensation for the

expenses of a war; but the splendor of these victories is, in some degree lost, by the very circumstance which ought to make it more grateful to us, because they have been gained without bloodshed; and because the people of these colonies have voluntarily sought the protection of a government, whose mild and beneficent sway, they had before experienced.—Sir, I am now to thank the house for the indulgence which they have shewn, and the patience with which they have permitted me to state my reasons for supporting an address, which I trust will meet the unanimous approbation of this house, because I believe it speaks the feelings of every subject of the British empire.

Mr. Fox.—Sir, I do not rise with the intention of objecting particularly to the proposed address in consequence of the speech which his Majesty has been most graciously pleased to make to both Houses of Parliament; nor am I disposed to dispute the soundness of the arguments employed by the honourable mover, and seconder of the address. I rise merely to advert to two points; one of which is omitted in the speech, and the other particularly alluded to. The point omitted in the speech is the mediation of Russia: a subject on which I cannot help thinking the house had a fair right to expect some communication. In the course of the last session of Parliament, when I called the attention of the house to the mediation of the court of St. Petersburg, a noble Secretary of State (Lord Hawkesbury), not now in this house, did, as strongly as language can express, pledge ministers as not only ready to accept of the mediation of Russia, if offered, but, if not offered, directly to solicit it. The noble Lord distinctly pledged himself, that Ministers were not only willing to hear the ideas of the court of Russia, as to the best mode of bringing about an accommodation of the differences betwixt this country and France; but ready to state what their own ideas were of the most practicable means of restoring a good understanding betwixt the two countries.*

* "On this ground (said Lord Hawkesbury), ministers had not only expressed their willingness to receive any proposition from the court of St. Petersburg, but they had gone much beyond this assurance. They had declared their readiness to explain, in the most frank and explicit terms, the views which they entertained on the points in dispute, and the mode which to them appeared the best calculated to bring about an amicable arrangement. No question of etiquette would stand in the way; the whole declaration of ministers had been given in the true spirit of peace. In aid of his Majesty's declaration, an

From all that I have seen, heard, or observed, I have every reason to think that the noble Secretary was sincere in the pledge which he then gave, and that ministers have acted on that declaration. One would have naturally thought, then, that in a speech from the Throne, at the opening of a new session, and after such an interval has taken place, as might afford some grounds of ascertaining how far the application was likely to be successful, his Majesty would have referred to the subject, and put the House in possession of the means of determining how far any negotiations were likely to lead to the result which was in view. I am sensible that this is not the particular day for taking up the consideration of the success or failure of these negotiations; but the information, the want of which I complain of in the speech, will be very necessary, when, on a future day, it may come to be discussed.—The other point to which I wish to allude, is one particularly referred to in the speech. In that part of the speech which refers to the situation of Ireland, the House are congratulated on the suppression of the late rebellion in that country, and a confident hope is held out of the permanent continuance of tranquillity. From past experience, I cannot easily flatter myself that such a hope will be realised. I can see no reason to think that permanent tranquillity will be established in Ireland while the present system is pursued. In the speech it is asserted, that the leaders of the late rebellion had in view, the introduction of French dominion into Ireland, and that the whole plan of the insurrection was founded on the co-operation of a French force, destined to overthrow the British constitution as now established in Ireland. Whatever be the crimes of the men, who were the authors of the late rebellion, I wish, in speaking of them, to be guided by justice. But, Sir, have not the leaders of the insurrection most unequivocally disclaimed all idea of a connection with the French Government? Have they not avowed, that they reprobated such a connexion, even with an idea of promoting their own views? Whatever atrocities the rebellion exhibited, and certainly no man

express assurance was given of his readiness to listen to any proposal for restoring the blessings of peace; and he had now to assure the honourable gentleman and the house, that ministers were ready to receive any offer of mediation on the part of Russia, or to offer to the mediation of that power the points in dispute betwixt the two governments."—See Political Register, vol. iii. p. 1730.

can think or hear with greater horror of those atrocities than I do: I must contend that it is not just to stigmatize the authors of the rebellion with at all leaguering themselves with the French government, in their views of destroying all connection with this country. A *hope* is also expressed in the speech, that those who had swerved from their allegiance, were now convinced of their error. It is plain, Sir, that the word here ought to have been *wish*, and not *hope*. Under the present system of government in Ireland, it is impossible, that any such hope can be rationally entertained; for, without a totally new system of managing the affairs of Ireland be adopted, a hope, of the Irish being convinced of their error can hardly be expected. It is not said, that another system is to be pursued, but we are only told, that a hope is entertained of the rebels being convinced of their error; thus shutting our eyes to the fate of that country, and the real state of the case. This, I allow, Sir, is not the day on which the consideration of the affairs of Ireland can come fairly before the House, but I should feel, that I was not doing my duty to my country, if I were even now, to let it be supposed, that there can be any rational hope of the continuance of permanent tranquillity in Ireland unless some measures are resorted to, of a nature very different from those now employed. When we recollect the description given of the general loyalty of the people of Ireland; when we recollect the representations given in the speeches of gentlemen in this house, we shall be careful of attaching much weight to any general representations of the state of that country. On a subject so important as this is, I cannot think it either wise or safe to trust much to general words. I hope and trust, that gentlemen will keep their minds open for any future discussion which this subject may create. I trust they will not be so far influenced by representations now given, or confide so implicitly in general assertions, as to think future enquiry unnecessary. It is the duty of every man to revolve the matter deeply in his mind, and not to forestall any measure or any decision which may hereafter take place. The members of this house could not feel themselves otherwise than guilty, if they suffered themselves to believe in the continuance of Irish tranquillity, because the country is represented as now contented, and because hopes are held out that this contentment is permanent.—Mr. Fox sat down with declaring, that he should not

disturb the unanimity which there seemed every reason to think would be maintained in the vote for the address.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer.—I rise, Sir, for the purpose of replying to the observations which have been made by the hon. member, on the speech with which his Majesty has been pleased to address his Parliament this day. Although the hon. member is not inclined to oppose the address, and is disposed to entertain a favourable opinion of the sentiments which generally pervade it, yet it would, he declares, have afforded him more unqualified satisfaction, if the mediation of the court of Russia, whether successful or not, had been explicitly mentioned in the speech from the Throne; and that the allusion to the insurrection in that part of the United Kingdom called Ireland, had been couched in other or more guarded expressions.—Sir, the hon. gentleman has stated, with accuracy, the general import of that pledge, which, during the last session of Parliament, was made by my noble friend, the Secretary of State, whom it has pleased his Majesty to promote to a seat in another assembly. My noble friend did certainly declare, as the hon. gentleman has fairly stated, that his Majesty's ministers were ready to accept, not only now, but at any future time, the mediation of the Emperor Alexander, towards terminating the unhappy and unprovoked hostility in which the British empire was involved; and that for the purpose of convincing all Europe of the equity of their cause, and the pacific nature of their intentions, they would not only accept it if offered, but that they would even condescend to solicit it. Sir, for the information of the hon. gentleman, I will communicate to him and to this house, that that mediation was offered by the court of Russia, and accepted with readiness and gratitude, on the part of his Majesty's servants; and although discussions of the greatest moment were consequently commenced, yet, I am sorry to say, that in their progress, they did not assume such a shape as to lead to any probability of an amicable arrangement with France. No man can be more concerned than I am, that the interference of that court has not been attended with that success which the hon. gentleman on a former occasion, seemed so zealous in his expectation of. I am not, however, at all astonished to find, that the hon. gentleman expresses surprise at not receiving more information relative to this subject, nor do I think the regret he has shown at finding any account of the issue of the negotiation omitted in his Majesty's speech at all un-

reasonable. I can assure the hon. gent. and the house, that his Majesty's servants have no wish whatever to withhold all the information in their power respecting the discussions which have taken place. The fact is, however, that circumstances of a nature which I hope may be temporary, but which I will not positively pledge myself will turn out to be of that nature, did prevent ministers from making a communication to the house. Their wish was to conceal no information which could at all throw light on the subject, but they did not wish that the communication which they made should be imperfect, as it necessarily must have been if made under existing circumstances. Though I will not absolutely pledge myself to make a communication, even if the obstacle arising from the circumstances to which I have referred were removed, yet I can have no difficulty in saying that I should not be unwilling to gratify the house with the information in question, if it appeared to be the general wish of the house that this information should be granted. What I have said on this topic is, I trust, sufficient to convince the house, that the omission of the mediation of Russia, in the speech was perfectly justified by circumstances. I will now, Sir, advert to what the hon. gent. said on the manner in which the speech notices the late insurrection in Ireland, and the actual state of that country. In his Majesty's speech a hope is expressed, that such part of his deluded subjects as have swerved from their allegiance are now convinced of their error, and that having compared the advantages they enjoy from the protection of a free constitution, with the condition of those countries which are under the dominion of the French government, they will cordially and zealously concur in resisting any attempt that may be made against the security and independence of the United Kingdom. I admit, with the hon. gent., that even to the worst of traitors justice is a debt which is due, but do not see how, in this instance, any injustice has been done to the leaders of the late rebellion in Ireland. The hon. gent. contends that it is unjust to attribute to the leaders of that rebellion any design of introducing French dominion into Ireland. I cannot admit that the passage in question will fairly admit of such a construction. It is merely intended to convey this idea, that the deluded part of the population of Ireland, who might be disposed to employ French aid in destroying their connection with this country, would be diverted from their views by contemplating

the contrast betwixt the condition of their own country and the countries now groaning under the miseries of French domination. I have heard it said, and I see no reason to doubt it, that the leader in that insurrection, previous to the judgment of the court being pronounced on him, expressly declared his abhorrence of any alliance with the French government, and advised his deluded countrymen to consume the grass under the invader's feet, rather than suffer their native land to be polluted by the footstep of a French soldier. It may be allowed that some of the persons making such declarations were in circumstances which lead us the less to doubt their sincerity. I will even concede to the hon. member, that some of the declarations might be true, but if it be meant to assert that none of the leaders of the late Irish rebellion were inclined to court an alliance with France, I must be permitted most peremptorily to deny such a position. I have the best means of knowing that such assertions are founded in gross falsehood. Let it be recollected too what happened during the rebellion. Let it be recollected that many of the leaders, though they had no idea of introducing a French government into their country, were not indisposed to admit French aid to enable them with more prospect of success to prosecute their own views. They were willing to admit this at the hazard of what they considered as a contingent, but what I must ever consider as a certain evil, the evil of being compelled to contend against French dominion, even after they had succeeded in separating themselves from this part of the empire. But let this be as it may, let the views of the Irish be as separate as possible from any notion of French alliance, my position is, that the contrast of their own condition, and that of those nations which the French government has subjugated, would induce them at all events to resist the common enemy of the civilized world. This contrast would, I am persuaded, operate as the strongest inducement for them to abstain from the prosecution of views which can only expose them to destruction. The hon. gent. says, that in the speech, instead of the *hope* expressed of such an event, it would have been better if the word *wish* had been introduced. Sir, I will tell that hon. gent. and also this house, that the persons whom his Majesty has called to his government, have not barely the wish, but a rational and well-grounded *hope* of the establishment of general and permanent tranquillity in that

country. Sir, I state with the strongest satisfaction, and with no little exultation, that the conduct of his Majesty's government has operated a very salutary and material alteration in the sentiments of the majority of the people of that country. But the hon. gent. says, it is impossible to expect the continuance of tranquillity in Ireland without attending more particularly to the real situation of the country, and unless some plan of removing existing grievances is resorted to. Whether it would be fit at all to argue the question of the state of Ireland in the present state of affairs, I shall leave to the wisdom of the house to discover. For my own part, I am not aware of the possibility of such a discussion at this moment being productive of one solid advantage. On the contrary, I am thoroughly persuaded that the agitation of the question in the present crisis of affairs, could only tend to aggravate those evils which I am sure the hon. member must as sincerely as any man deplore, without producing any one of those advantages which the hon. gent. is so anxious to accomplish. The hon. gent. has recommended to members to keep their minds open for future discussion, to avoid the formation of prepossessions, to be ready for the consideration of the question whenever it occurs, with moderation and impartiality. It is hardly necessary for me to give any pledge to the house, if the subject is ever brought regularly under discussion, what conduct I may think it my duty to pursue. I shall studiously endeavour to keep my mind unbiassed and unprejudiced by any previous statements or antecedent representation. The hon. Member will find me ready to enter on the discussion temperately and gravely, and to be guided in my judgment by what appears most consonant to the principles of justice, policy, and humanity. I trust that the house will be content with this declaration, as to the second objection of the hon. gent. on the opposite bench, and that the unanimity which is likely to prevail this night, may experience no interruption; but that we may carry our expression to the foot of the Throne, with that ready and universal zeal, which the sentiments contained in his Majesty's most gracious speech so justly demand.

Sir Francis Burdett.—I do not rise, Sir, for the purpose of disturbing the unanimity of the House upon the present occasion. I shall vote for the Address. But there is a matter of the greatest importance, connected with that volunteer system which

has been so highly complimented in it; which I think it my duty to mention. And in so doing, I beg that I may not be misunderstood, nor misrepresented. In what I am about to say, I mean not the smallest censure upon the volunteers at large, nor even upon the system: however I may doubt, whether that system be or be not the least expensive, or the most eligible and effectual military force, either for the purpose of defence or offence. Neither do I intend the slightest censure even upon that particular corps, whose conduct in one particular I disapprove. I can easily believe, that they may have been actuated by the best motives. The necessity of the times, the novelty of their situation, zeal for the service in which they have embarked, may all have prompted them to speedy and vigorous measures, the consequences of which they had not maturely considered.—But, Sir, I hold in my hand a paper, which purports to be an Address from the St. Giles's and St. George's Bloomsbury Volunteer Association,* directed to be carried

* The following is a correct copy of the Address to which Sir Francis alludes. "The Committee and the Commanding Officer of the St. Giles and St. George, Bloomsbury, Volunteer Association, most earnestly request your attention to the within paper.—St. Giles and St. George, Bloomsbury Volunteer Association.—The Committee find themselves under the necessity of laying before the inhabitants of the united parishes, a state of the fund of the Association; and of requesting their particular attention to a few considerations of much importance to the country and to themselves.—From the statement hereto subjoined, of the subscriptions and the expenditure already made, and of the necessary current outgoings, it manifestly appears that the fund (notwithstanding the utmost economy has been used) is in no degree adequate to complete the establishment, much less to continue it.—A great number of persons enrolled, extremely zealous, but not opulent, are at this moment non-effective, because the fund is unable to furnish them with clothing.—It is unnecessary to state many considerations in order to excite the zeal of the inhabitants to supply a sufficient fund by further subscriptions.—The danger to which the country is at this moment exposed is too imminent and alarming to require to be dwelt upon.—The time may possibly be drawing near when the inhabitants would gladly sacrifice one-half of their property to be secure in the enjoyment of the remainder. It will be too late, when the enemy may be approaching the metropolis, to supply the means of training and disciplining those who have the courage and zeal to defend it.—Few districts, if any, have stronger reasons from local circumstances, which need not be pointed out, to wish for a strong volunteer force to be ready in it, in case the regular troops should be sent to the coast.—Few districts are better able, from their opulence, to bear the necessary expense of a Volunteer Association, either for the public defence, or for local protec-

from house to house throughout those parishes; calling upon those who had already contributed, as well as upon those who had not; giving their opinion of the ability and wealth of the different inhabitants; and advertising them of an intended domiciliary visit to each house by two of the corps; threatening to publish their names at the close of the year; and particularly pointing out the aged, the infirm, and the women, whose fears may be supposed most easily excited.—Sir, it is more especially my duty to notice this, as it has passed in a county, which I have the honour to represent in

tion.—The Committee, from viewing the present state of the subscription, as it respects either the whole amount, or the sums given by individuals, are satisfied that many of the inhabitants were not aware of the extent of the necessary expenditure, or of the claims upon them for furnishing the means of it.—Striking examples of pecuniary exertions have occurred in almost every part of the kingdom.—Many individuals have singly expended several thousand pounds in raising and supporting Volunteer Corps.—Even towards a general Subscription in one county a Nobleman subscribed 2,000l., a Prelate 2,000l. several 1,000l., many private Gentlemen 500l. 400l. and 300l. each; while, in these parishes, the highest subscription (except in two instances) has been 50l. That sum, however, standing even as the highest subscription, though small, in comparison with the sums above-mentioned, would have produced an ample fund, if others of the parishioners had subscribed proportionably.—Ten different persons have each subscribed 50l., making up above a sixth of the whole subscription; while many others known to be of great opulence, either have not subscribed at all, or have given sums so comparatively small, that the Committee is most sincerely convinced they have acted under misconception.—The Committee abstain at present from publishing the subscriptions, until every person has had a full opportunity of reconsidering the matter. Before the end of the year they will be published.—The crisis admits of no false delicacy—the present application is not to the liberality of persons—it is a call upon their patriotism and their duty, to come forward upon no less an occasion than that of rescuing their country from destruction, and of defending the very existence of themselves and their families.—It is, therefore, fit that the country should know who the persons are that are zealous in its defence, and who those are that at such a moment can decline to supply liberally the pecuniary means necessary to military exertions.—Those who are unable from age, infirmity, sex, or other cause, to render personal service, should particularly recollect the great inconveniences and sacrifices submitted to by those who are performing military duty—they should endeavour to balance their account with their country, by more extensive pecuniary aid.—Even those inhabitants who are serving or subscribing elsewhere, should remember that they have a stake to protect in this district.—The Committee will, in a few days, depute some of its members to apply to the inhabitants from house to house for their further subscriptions, and are confident that the application will not be in vain.—The inhabi-

this House. It is impossible to foresee to what extent this practice may be carried. That an armed corps should be a deliberative assembly, was never thought advisable; but that we should have parochial parliaments through the land, raising money at their will upon the inhabitants, could not be borne for a moment: especially when it is considered that these same persons undertake to determine the gross amount of the sum to be raised, and the quota of the individuals, and that these same persons are to receive it, to dispose of it, and to partake of it.—Sir, it is the duty of this House

tants need only pay, at present, such part of their subscriptions as may be convenient, leaving it to the Committee to call upon them proportionably for the remainder, by instalments as it shall be wanted.—By order of the Committee,
Nov. 1, 1803. JOHN WRIGHT, Secretary.

State of the Fund of the St. Giles and St. George Bloomsbury Volunteer Association.

Amount of Subscriptions, from the 25th of July to the 1st of Nov. 1803 3005 0 0

<i>Expended.</i>		
Clothing.....	1398 6 0	-
Accoutrements	562 10 0	
Drill Sergeants, Advertisements, Drums, Music, &c. &c. &c.	609 4 0	
		2570 0 0

Further Expenditure necessary to complete the Establishment.

Clothing for 300 Men and Drummers	1800 0 0	
Great Coats, 600	630 0 0	
Knapsacks, &c.	1050 0 0	
Pickers, Brushes, Drivers, &c.	165 0 0	
Accoutrements, 300..	450 0 0	
Grenadiers' Extras ..	200 0 0	
Light Infantry Ditto	100 0 0	
Sentry Boxes	100 0 0	
Armoury and Magazine	250 0 0	
Orderly Room	150 0 0	
Printing, Stationary, &c.	100 0 0	
Pioneers	90 0 0	
Erecting abutment for Ball-firing, &c.	150 0 0	
		5235 0 0

<i>Current Expenses.</i>		
Ammunition	600 0 0	
Armourers	600 0 0	
Drill Sergeants	600 0 0	
18 Drummers	400 0 0	
Secretary	— — —	
Casual Clothing	200 0 0	
Incidental Expenses...	600 0 0	
Clerks, Messenger, &c.	200 0 0	
		3200 0 0

Total Amount necessary 11005 0 0

Total Amount of Subscriptions.. 3005 0 0

Deficiency £8000 0 0

especially to meet, in the very beginning, a principle so dangerous: and, of all persons, the administration of the country ought to be the most alarmed at it; since the principle of this measure goes directly and immediately to the destruction, not only of this, but of every kind of government, and tends to the introduction of that anarchy, of which so much has been said to be apprehended. The motive may excuse the individuals, but it does not at all abate the malignity of the principle, for it is well known that many of the most ruinous practices to nations have been begun from good motives, and for good purposes.—I have thought it my duty to take the earliest opportunity of noticing and reprobating this measure; and am persuaded ministers will take care, that it shall not be necessary for me to trouble the House hereafter on the subject.—The question was then put upon the Address, and agreed to *nem. con.*, and a committee appointed to prepare the same.—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Wednesday, November 23.

The house met at half-past two o'clock, in order to proceed to St. James's with the address to his Majesty.—Lord Ashburton took the oaths and his seat; after which their Lordships adjourned until Wednesday, and proceeded to St. James's.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, November 23.

[MINUTES.]—The *Speaker* informed the house that certain petitioning burgesses, complaining of an undue election and return, for the borough of Great Grimsby, in the county of Lincoln, had failed to enter into their recognizances within the period prescribed by the act of parliament, and that, consequently, their petition could not be attended to.—The house then proceeded to vote the usual standing orders of the house for grand committees on religion, courts of justice, trade, &c. &c.—Mr. Vansittart moved an instruction to the committee upon expiring laws, that they do inquire what specific laws of a public and general nature have been made by great Britain or Ireland or by the parliament of the United Kingdom, and which of them have expired from September, 1802, to the 22nd of November, 1803, &c. and which of them are fit to be

continued, &c. Ordered.—Mr. Jarvis gave notice that he should on Friday next move for leave to bring in a bill to prevent the desertion and escape of petty officers, seamen, and others, from his Majesty's service, by means or under colour of any civil or criminal process. He should have given this notice for to-morrow, had he not understood that the house was to have the honour of waiting on his Majesty with the address to-morrow, on which occasion it was not usual to do any other business.

[WATERFORD ELECTION COMMITTEE.]

—Mr. Dundas reported at the bar, from the committee of the Waterford election, that two of the members of that committee, Mr. Ward and Mr. F. W. Grant were absent, and that the other members, after waiting one hour, adjourned.

The *Speaker* informed the house, that since the nomination of the committee. Mr. Ward had ceased to be a member of that house, and therefore there could be no further proceeding by the house with respect to him. With respect to Mr. Grant, there was a provision in an act of Parliament for ordering his attendance in the house, to offer his excuse for his absence, or to undergo the censure of the house: a motion might therefore be made for his attendance in the house on a given day, which, of course, would not be a distant one—Mr. Dundas, therefore, moved, “that Francis William Grant, Esq. do attend in his place on Friday next.”—After a few observations from the chair, upon the regularity of the motion, and the usual practice of the house on similar occasions, the motion was put and carried.

[BOSTON ELECTION PETITION.]—Mr. Ellison adverted to the petition of John Ogle, Esq. complaining of an undue election and return for the borough of Boston, in the county of Lincoln, against Mr. Fydel, the present sitting member. He desired, that the entry on the journals respecting this petition, might be read; which was accordingly done. He then desired that an entry on the journals in the year 1744, relative to the case of a petitioner who had been allowed seven days time to give in his qualification, on account of his being beyond seas at the time he was served with notice to do so, which he said was precisely the case of the present sitting member, Mr. Fydel; which entry being read, he moved, “that Mr. Fydel be allowed seven days from this present day, in order to prepare and lay before the house, a particular account of his qualification to be admitted as a member.”

The *Speaker* entered into a full explanation of the case. He reminded the house of the jealousy with which they were always actuated in matters of this nature. Yet he was well aware that laudable as that jealousy was, it would never stand in the way of justice and equity when they could be fairly attended without prejudice to either party. It was determined, by an order of the house, that when the qualification of candidates was called in question, the particulars of that qualification should be produced by him within fifteen days after the complaint of his wanting it, was made against him. The usual notice, it appears, had been sent to Mr. Fyddell, in the present case, but not complied with; and the reason adduced for his non-compliance was, his indispensable absence beyond sea. A precedent, similar to the present case, occurred in the year 1744. It respected also a naval officer who was necessarily absent on the service of his country; and the house then judged it fit to extend the time. Should the house be now inclined to grant the same indulgence, they would agree to the motion made by the honourable gent. —Mr. Ellison's motion was then put and agreed to.

[RENEWED ELECTION PETITIONS.]—The *Speaker* called the attention of the house to the renewal of petitions respecting contested elections, and intimated that they should be brought forward in the order of their priority, as they stood last session. Those of the fifth class were then brought forward; among the first of which were the petitions for Middlesex, Midhurst, and the borough of Southwark.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then rose to suggest the propriety of deferring the considerations of these petitions till after the Christmas recess. Should it be the pleasure of the House to adopt that suggestion, it should be his wish to pursue the same plan as that adopted last year, viz. that an order should be made for a call of the house, and that two petitions should be balloted for on two days of each week. The house must be sensible how inconvenient it might be to enforce a call of the House at the present moment, and under the present circumstances of the country. Under that impression, he had no doubt but that they would see the propriety of postponing the consideration of those petitions till the 2d of February, after the usual recess. The business which was likely to call together a full attendance would most probably be brought forward at that period; neither would the arrangement he was anxious for, interfere in the least with the

time of the usual recess. He should therefore move, that the petitions for Middlesex and Midhurst be brought forward on Thursday, the 2d of February, and that for the Borough of Southwark on the following Tuesday, the 7th of February. These motions were put and agreed to.

[ADDRESS.]—The Hon. *Cropley Ashley* brought up the report of the address proposed to be carried by the house to the foot of the throne, in return for His Majesty's most gracious speech delivered yesterday to both houses of parliament. The address was read a first time, and on the motion that this address be now read a second time,

Mr. *Windham* rose and addressed the chair as follows:

Sir, I offer myself to day to your notice, not with a view of retracting in any degree the assent which I gave yesterday in a former stage of this address, but simply for the purpose of marking more distinctly the grounds of that assent, and obviating a misconception which might be liable to arise upon it. I wished the question to pass unanimously yesterday, for the same reasons which make me wish it to pass unanimously to day; namely, that nothing may seem to call in question the unanimity of our determination to give to his Majesty unbounded support, and to maintain the cause of the country through every possible trial, and to the last extremity. I should be sorry that any thing should appear on the face of our debates, which, in the mind even of the most rude observer, could create a doubt upon that subject. But while we are guarding against an error of this sort, let us take care not to incur one of an opposite tendency; that, namely, which would suppose, that unanimity in support of the country, was unanimity in support of the ministers. There may be some possibly, who think, as there are many, undoubtedly, who wish to have it thought, that the greater the dangers and difficulties of the country are, by whatever causes brought on, the greater must our acquiescence be in the ministry of the time being, and the more complete our forbearance of all that is usually called opposition. And if by opposition is meant a captious and vexatious opposition, an opposition on things of doubtful nature or inferior consequence, an opposition for the purpose of impeding ministers and making the government difficult to them, the opinion is certainly well founded. What it would be hard to justify at any time, must be wholly unjustifiable in circumstances such as those supposed. But

if there are persons, who think that of the danger here alleged as a reason for supporting ministers, the ministers themselves form the principal part; that the preparations of the enemy, however menacing, would have little terror, if met with wisdom and ability; that the seat of the evil is here rather than abroad; that it is the weakness of the defence, and not the vigour of the attack that constitutes the danger; that Buonapartè and his legions, however terrific, are not half so terrific as the little band which we see before us on the Treasury Bench; if there are persons who hold these opinions, to such persons it would be idle to say, that, for fear of exposing the weakness or lessening the authority of ministers, they were to stand quiet spectators of what was passing, and were neither to attempt to prevent the mischief, or point out the source from which they conceived it to proceed. Such is the situation in which I feel myself to stand. I have no wish, and in one view certainly have no right, to speak with slight or disparagement of the abilities of the hon. gentlemen. Individually considered, they are all men of cultivated minds, of liberal education, of good natural endowments, not unread in the history of their country, not unpractised in its business, not unprovided with those talents and acquirements which are necessary for the conducting of business in this house. But if I am to speak of them collectively, as men forming the council which is to guide the affairs of a great empire, which is to rule the world in a crisis like the present, I must say, from whatever causes it arises, that they are weakness itself. I really believe the country will perish in their hands. I believe the hon. gentlemen will fairly see us out; that we shall not outlive their administration; that they will prove, as I believe, I once before took the liberty of remarking to them, the *Angustuli* in whose hands the empire will fall. There is an old joke which we may remember, of Cicero's, who, when some person had ceased to be Consul on the same day on which he had been made, observed, that the person in question might tell of a prodigy which few of his predecessors could boast, for that the sun had never set during his consulate. I wish that something equally prodigious may not be found in the history of the hon. gentlemen, and that it may not be to be said of them hereafter, that their administration lasted as long as the country.—It is now just two years and a few weeks since I felt myself compelled to say to them in this place, and upon something of a similar oc-

casion, namely, the first day of the meeting of Parliament, "that they had signed the death warrant of their country.*" The affairs of the country have been in their hands, without interruption, from that day to this. And can we venture to say, that the gloomy forebodings then expressed have made no progress towards their accomplishment, or that the hon. gentlemen do not bid fairer to put the finishing stroke to the work which they were then supposed to have begun? With these impressions, it is childish to talk of forbearing opposition, in cases where opposition would otherwise be proper, for fear of impeding the exertions of the hon. gentlemen, or exciting a belief that the country was not safe in their hands. Were I to forbear any opportunities of so doing, I am sure it must be from motives far different from those of regard for the safety of the country.—With respect to the address itself, notwithstanding the care which has been taken, and properly taken, to avoid any occasion of difference, objections to it would not be wanting, were this the moment for insisting upon them.—In point of taste, I could have wished, that less even had been said, than has been, of the conquests in the West Indies, and the impression thereby made on the enemy. Wretched, indeed, must be our view of things, if, at a moment like the present, we can amuse ourselves with such objects, and not see, that to the contempt in which the enemy holds them compared with the immense projects which he is meditating, we owe, in great measure, the facility with which they have fallen into our hands.—Upon the subject of Ireland, I agree entirely in the remarks made yesterday by an honourable gentleman (Mr. Fox), that the hope expressed is too sanguine, either for the nature of the thing, or for any confidence to be reposed in the testimony, on which we receive it. I agree with him also, in the fears which I understood him to express,—fears very far from being allayed by what we have heard subsequently,—that the views entertained respecting Ireland, and seeming in some degree to

* The following is the passage to which Mr. Windham alludes.—"Sir, I speak in perfect plainness and sincerity, from the bottom of my heart, and with the solemnity of a death-bed declaration (a situation much resembling that in which we all stand) when I declare, that my honourable friends, who, in a moment of rashness and weakness, have fatally put their hands to this treaty, have signed the death-warrant to their country. They have given it a blow, under which it may languish for a few years, but from which I do not conceive how it is possible for it ever to recover." See Political Register, Vol. 2, p. 1093.

be indicated in the speech, were far from being of a sort which promised tranquillity or safety to that kingdom. But the part perhaps of the address most objectionable, is that concluding paragraph, which speaks of the issue of the present contest. The language there held has too much tendency to countenance a notion, than which nothing can be more false and foolish, that by the issue of the present contest is to be understood only the issue of the invasion; which once past and decided in our favour, all beyond is to be security and glory. We know how readily the minds of men out of doors, will run into such a notion, and we may suspect even some of a higher description within these walls; but nothing could be more disgraceful or fatal than that such a notion should appear for a moment to be recognised by the house at large. This is all that I wish to say upon the subject of the present address, either generally or in detail.—One word more only, upon a matter of a different sort, and which I am tempted to introduce to-day, principally because it is the first occasion that offers, and because no man can say, in our present circumstances, whether the first occasion may not be the last, nor how soon we may be called away, as was observed by an honourable gentleman yesterday, to the performance of duties more active at least, if not more important, than those which we have to discharge in this house.—It will equally with the other subjects which I have touched upon, lead to no debate, nor require from the honourable gentlemen opposite to me, even an answer.—I am come, in common with many other gentlemen, from a residence of some time in my own country: and upon the result of that residence, what I have to declare is, that should any great stroke be struck in the county of Norfolk, of the sort that has been pointed out to the honourable gentlemen, and for want of those precautions, which have likewise been pointed out to them; I shall, certainly, think, that there will be grounds of serious criminal charge against the honourable gent., and should the case not be such as, by the very magnitude of the evil, to put an end to all proceedings, to sweep away both accuser and accusation,

‘To take at once the poet and the song,’

I shall probably feel it my duty to stand forward as the bringer of that charge.—More than this upon the present occasion need not be said, nor could, perhaps, be said with propriety. I had prepared, before I left Norfolk, a representation upon the subject,

and proposed it to a meeting of gentlemen assembled for other county business, wishing to have transmitted it to government with the advantage of their signatures; but, for reasons, which they, of course, thought satisfactory, which were not explained, as in fact no discussion was invited, and which I shall not presume to guess at, they declined to join in the representation. It was my duty to afford them the opportunity; as I conceive it to have been my duty now to mention the subject in the way that I have done.—The honourable gentlemen will not consider me as bringing a charge against them, at least not one of which it is necessary for them to take notice, as it must rest for the present solely on the authority of the individual who brings it, unsupported by any proof. As a menace even, the honourable gentlemen will be entitled to hold it cheap if they are confident that no blame can be imputed to them, but that every thing has been done, that can or ought to be done. It is as a menace, however, that I intend it; as the only means which I now possess of compelling attention to objects, which, in my apprehension at least, require to be attended to.—This is all that I have to say upon this point. Upon the general topic, I trust I have sufficiently explained myself, and shall therefore no longer detain the house from voting the present address, with that unanimity, which, under the explanation now given, I shall be happy to see it received.

The address was then read a second time, agreed to, and ordered to be presented to His Majesty by the whole house: and those members who were of His Majesty's most honourable privy council were ordered humbly to know His Majesty's pleasure when he would be graciously pleased to receive the same.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, November 24.

[MINUTES.]—This day the Speaker came to the house at half past two, according to the adjournment of the preceding day. Very few members, however, gave their attendance, and at twenty minutes past three, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer arrived, there were not above thirty members present. The despair of making a house was at this time very great. At length, about a quarter before four, Mr. Serjeant, who had been sent in quest of Members, arrived with the members necessary to enable the speaker to take the chair, several of whom had been called out from the drawing room for that purpose.—Lord Charles Somerset appeared at

the bar, and announced that His Majesty having been waited upon to know when it would be his pleasure to receive the address voted the day before, had appointed that day at half past three o'clock.—The Chancellor of the Exchequer moved the order of the day for taking into consideration His Majesty's speech from the throne. That part of His Majesty's speech which expressed a reliance on his faithful commons for making provision for the expenses of the ensuing year, being read, the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved, "that a supply be granted to His Majesty; and that the House should to-morrow resolve itself into a committee to consider of that motion." Ordered—The house then adjourned, and, preceded by the Speaker, went up to St. James's with the address.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, November 25th.

[MINUTES.]—As soon as the house met, the Speaker stated that he, accompanied by several members, waited yesterday on His Majesty, to present the address voted by the house in reply to His Majesty's speech; to which His Majesty was pleased to give the following most gracious answer:—"Gentlemen, I return you my warmest thanks for this dutiful and affectionate address. Such a declaration of your sentiments at the present moment cannot fail to afford me the highest satisfaction. I have the most perfect reliance on the continuance of your support, and on the zealous exertions of my faithful subjects, to bring the contest, in which I am engaged, to a successful and honourable issue."—This answer was ordered to be entered on the Journals.—A new writ was ordered for the election of a representative to serve in parliament for the town of Rye, in the room of Lord Hawkesbury called up to the house of peers; and a writ was also ordered for the Royal Boroughs of Inverness, etc. in the room of Cumming Gordon, esq. who, since his election, has accepted the stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds.—The Chancellor of the Exchequer moved the order of the day, for the house to resolve itself into a committee for granting a supply to His Majesty, and that so much of His Majesty's most gracious speech as referred to his reliance on his faithful commons for a supply, be referred to said committee.—The house having resolved itself into the committee, Mr. Hobhouse in the chair, that part of His Majesty's speech was read, and the committee came to a resolution that a supply be granted to His Majesty.—The House was

then resumed, and the report of the committee of supply ordered to be brought up on Monday.—Petitions were presented, complaining of undue returns for the boroughs of Windsor, Weymouth, and Ilchester. The two former were ordered to be taken into consideration upon Thursday the 9th of February, and the latter upon Tuesday the 14th.—Mr. Manning presented a petition from the directors of the London dock company, praying that they might be allowed to raise a further sum of 500,000*l.*, in addition to the sum of 1,200,000*l.* already raised. Referred to the consideration of a select committee, which was appointed.—Mr. Vansittart moved, that there be laid before the house, an account of the net produce of all the permanent taxes in the years and quarters, ending on the 10th of October, 1802, and 1803 respectively. Ordered.

[WATERFORD ELECTION COMMITTEE.]

—Mr. C. Dundas, at the bar, reported from the committee appointed to determine the merits of the petitions complaining of an undue election and return for the city of Waterford, that, pursuant to the permission of the house, that committee had adjourned from Wednesday to this day. That they had met consequently at three o'clock, when, finding that Francis William Grant, Esq. did not attend, they had set for an hour, and then adjourned to half-past four, directing the chairman to report the same to the House.—The report was ordered to be brought up.—Mr. C. Dundas, as chairman of the committee, then moved, that the said F. W. Grant, Esq. be discharged from further attendance on that committee. In laying the grounds for this motion, he hoped the House would excuse him for stating briefly the circumstances of the case. It would be in the recollection of the house, that previous to the recess, a commission had been sent to Ireland for the purpose of taking evidence, which commission had been returned with the minutes of the evidence taken before the commissioners; upon a due consideration of which the committee was to decide the merits of the petitions. It would also be in the recollection of the house, that towards the close of last session, an application had been made to the house, by the consent, and for the convenience of all parties, for permission to adjourn all further proceedings till the second day of the present session; which permission the house had thought fit to grant, and the committee had adjourned accordingly. This was a point upon which any member of the committee could not be ignorant, as it must have been equally known to all. On the second day of

this session, the committee had met, with the exception of the honourable member, who was the object of the motion, when, on reporting his non-attendance to the House, they had obtained permission to adjourn further to this day, in the hope that the hon. member would attend in his place, and that they should have the benefit of his advice in their proceedings. He, however, had neglected to attend, and in consequence, the chairman thought it his duty for the furtherance of justice, and in order that the committee might be enabled to proceed, to submit the motion he had made to the House, particularly as the provisions of the election laws authorised a committee, on an Irish petition, to proceed, though it should be reduced to nine members.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* hoped the House would not accede to the motion, unless very cogent reasons should be assigned for the absence of the hon. member. To discharge a member from his attendance on a committee, was an indulgence, which the House never granted but upon very substantial grounds, and unless some conclusive reasons should be assigned in the present instance, he should feel himself under the necessity of dissenting from the motion.

Mr. *Charles Grant* begged to be indulged, while he stated in justification of the hon. member, what he knew of the cause of his absence. The hon. member was at present on duty with his regiment, which having been lately raised, required all his care and attention. He had not been aware of the order of the House which authorised election committees to continue, notwithstanding a prorogation of parliament, and had neglected to attend under an impression that such committees were necessarily dissolved at the end of a session. This was a fact which he could confidently state, as he had himself received a letter some weeks since from the hon. member desiring to be informed on the subject, which information he was not at that time competent to give.

The *Speaker* observed, that there were two distinct questions for the House to consider; first, whether it should be its pleasure, for the furtherance of justice, to enable the committee to proceed, by discharging Mr. Grant from further attendance; secondly, what conduct it would be its pleasure to adopt, with respect to the hon. member who had absented himself from his duty. These questions were wholly distinct, and it would be for the House to determine in what manner it should think proper to dispose of them. There was a case in point on the journals. It was the case of Mr. Booth Grey, who

removing from town on urgent business pending the sitting of a committee, of which he was a member, wrote a letter to the chairman, stating the circumstance, and requesting him to communicate the same to the house. On the letter being produced, he was discharged from further attendance on the committee, but ordered to attend in his place on a certain day, and account for his absence.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* concurred with the sentiments that had fallen from the chair. He had no objection to discharge the hon. member from further attendance, in order to enable the committee to proceed, provided it could not operate to limit the discretion of the house, as to the conduct it may think proper to adopt with respect to the defaulter. He, however, submitted, whether the object of the motion might not be attained as well by wording it differently, that is, "to enable the committee to proceed notwithstanding the absence of this member."

Mr. *Ward* concurred in the suggestion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and observed that the object of the hon. Chairman would be fully effected by so wording his motion, which had been drawn up in the other form with an unintentional inaccuracy.

Mr. *Tierney* did not think the case of Mr. Grey applicable in the present instance. In that case Mr. Grey had appeared by letter before the house, in the present there was no appearance whatever; and he trusted that for the regularity of the proceedings of the House, they would not suffer such a resolution to be placed on their journals, without being accompanied by a good and sufficient reason or the ground on which they had adopted it.

Mr. *Bragge* agreed with his hon. friend (Mr. Tierney) that such a proceeding should not appear on their journals without some document to shew why it had been adopted. He submitted to the hon. member (Mr. Charles Grant), whether he might not put what he had already stated in that form to the House, whereby it would be justified in agreeing to the consequent proceedings.—Mr. C. Grant's statement was then entered on the journals, as the ground on which the house assented to the following motions
1st. That F. W. Grant, Esq. be discharged from further attendance on the committee.
2nd. That the committee be enabled to proceed notwithstanding his absence; and, 3d. That F. W. Grant, Esq. be ordered to attend in his place on Wednesday the seventh day of December next.

[*DESERTION OF SEAMEN.*—Mr. *Jarvis* rose pursuant to the notice he had given, to move for leave to bring in a bill to prevent the desertion and escape of petty officers, seamen, and others, from his Majesty's service, by means or under colour of any civil or criminal process. He should detain the house but a very short time, in stating the grounds and principles of the measure he proposed to bring forward. There were too many convincing proofs, that the processes of law had been frequently perverted, for the purpose of enabling individuals to escape from the naval service, in which they had been employed. It would not be necessary for him to trespass on the attention of the house, by enumerating the various instances of fraudulent arrests for civil actions, or the many pretended criminal charges, under colour of which, seamen had been removed from the authority of their naval officer, and then set at large, to the manifest injury of his Majesty's service. The measure he proposed, would correct this abuse altogether; and he felt great satisfaction in assuring the house, that it would not interfere with the rights, nor infringe the privileges of any description of men. It would leave the seaman, who might be improperly impressed, in the same situation as to his habeas corpus, in which he now stands; and it would not weaken the claim of creditors, nor trench upon their just and legal rights. It would leave the arrested seamen, in the same situation precisely, as to service, in which he stood before the arrest, as its principal object would be, to secure his return to the service to which he may have belonged, as soon as the action should be satisfied. The principal object of the measure he meant to introduce, was to make sheriffs responsible for the return of such seamen as should be arrested under their authority, to the service instead of being left at large on their release from the arrest. It was to be obligatory on the sheriff, in such a case, to convey the seamen, within a reasonable time, and for an adequate compensation, to the nearest port and give him up to the port-admiral, or regulating captain, commanding there. The consequence of this regulation would be an essential benefit to the seaman, who would be conveyed back to his ship, free of any expense. With regard also to seamen fraudulently arrested, the bill would have a most salutary effect, as it would effectually prevent any future perversion of the process of the law to cover the desertion of persons serving in his Majesty's navy. These were the leading features of his measure, and, he trusted, the house would concur with him in

its expediency. He therefore should move for leave to bring in the bill. Leave was given.—Mr. *Jarvis* then brought up the bill, which was read a first time, ordered to be read a second time on Tuesday next, and to be printed.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, November 28.

[*MINUTES.*—The Speaker took the chair at half after three.—Col. *Hayne* then presented a petition for leave to bring in an inclosure bill, which was granted.—Mr. *Foster* appeared at the bar from the Exchequer office, with an account of the net produce of the taxes of the current year, ending the 10th of October. The account was ordered to lie on the table, and a sufficient number of copies to be printed for the use of the members.—Sir *C. Bunbury* presented a petition from the debtors confined in the county gaol of Suffolk.—Ordered to lie on the table. Mr. *W. Dundas* gave notice of his intention to bring in a bill to explain the acts relating to statute labour in Scotland, with respect to the construction of which, doubts subsisted. He declined mentioning a particular day, stating, that it was his intention to write to the representatives for Scotland, and to fix such a day as would be convenient to them, for the discussion of the subject.—Lord *Castlereagh* gave notice of his intention to move on Wednesday, for leave to bring in a bill, relative to the bonding of East India goods.—Mr. *Hobhouse* brought up the report of the committee of supply. The resolution for granting a supply was agreed to *nem. con.* and the committee ordered to sit again on Wednesday.—Mr. *Vansittart* moved, that there be laid before the house, the following estimates, viz.; An estimate of the ordinary expenses of the navy for the year 1804; an estimate of the expense of the half-pay of officers of the navy, and such officers of the royal marines, as served in the last war; an estimate of the expense of building and repairing ships of war, and other expenses in his Majesty's dock-yards, generally known by the denomination of wear and tear, for the year 1804; an estimate of the expense of guards, and garrisons and other descriptions of his Majesty's land forces for 1804; an estimate of the expense of ordnance for land service, for the year 1804; an estimate of the expense, incurred for services, not provided for by Parliament: an estimate of the expenses of transport service, for the year 1804. Ordered.—Mr. *Vansittart* also moved that an humble address be presented to his Majesty, praying that his Majesty would

be graciously pleased to give directions, that the proper officers should prepare such estimates, and lay them before the house. Agreed to.—Petitions relating to the controverted elections, for the following places, were laid on the table, and appointed for consideration in the following order:—Aylesbury and Glasgow, February 14; Baldock and Honiton, February 16; Carrickfergus and Sudbury, February 21; Minehead and Hereford City, February 23; London and Coventry, February 28; Stirling, March 1, 1804.—Mr. Adams gave notice, that on Wednesday next, he should move to vote the seamen, deemed necessary for the service of the year 1804.

[*INCOME TAX.*]—Mr. Alderman Combe wished to be informed by the Secretary of the Treasury, whether there was any intention to bring in a bill to simplify the act of last session, relating to this tax. Much difficulty was, at present, felt in making out the returns; and it was, therefore, extremely desirable, that it should be decidedly stated, whether any alteration was to take place in the standard by which the return was to be regulated, and the manner in which it was to be made as the act now stood.

Mr. Vansittart said, he had no intimation from his majesty's ministers, that any alteration was to be made in the act alluded to by the worthy alderman. On the contrary, he understood it to be their intentions, that for the present, the returns should be made, according to the act, as it now stood; and that this should be continued for one year, in order to afford a full and fair trial to the present system. The whole of its faults and deficiencies, which would then be perfectly understood, may be then corrected by one bill, which would be much better than to trouble Parliament at present with separate bills, on every supposed and ill-conceived difficulty or imperfection.

Mr. Alderman Combe expressed himself satisfied with the answer given by the honourable gentleman.

[*BARRACKS.*] Admiral Berkeley wished to know, whether the expense of the barracks now building, was to be included in the estimates just moved for.

Mr. Vansittart said, the expense of barracks was not one of those included in the estimates which he had moved the house to order,

laws. It was ordered to lie on the table, and to be printed.—Sir Robert Buxton moved, that there be laid before the house an account of the quantity of strong beer, table beer, and small beer, brewed in this country, and liable to duty, from the 5th Jan. 1802, to the 5th Jan. 1803.—Mr. Vansittart suggested, the propriety of wording the motion in such a way as to enable the officers to whom the order was to be directed, to comply with the desire of the house, and with the wishes of the hon. baronet, which it would be impossible for them to do if the motion remained as it at present stood, as they could have cognizance of such beer only as actually paid the duty.—The motion amended according to this suggestion, was put and agreed to.—The bill for preventing the desertion of petty officers and seamen was read a second time and ordered to a committee of the whole house on Thursday next.—Mr. Steele appeared at the bar, and informed the house that his Majesty had been waited on with the address voted yesterday, for the production of certain estimates to the house, and that his Majesty had been graciously pleased to order the same.—Mr. Tierney presented a petition from the debtors confined in the county gaol of Surrey.—It was ordered to lie on the table.—Mr. Adams brought up the account of the estimates of the ordinary and extraordinary expenses of the navy for year 1804. Ordered that these estimates be taken into consideration on Friday next.—The Chancellor of the Exchequer gave notice, that he would to-morrow move for leave to bring in a bill to continue further the restriction of specie from the Bank.—Mr. Corry gave notice of a similar motion with respect to the Bank of Ireland.

[*PRIVATE PETITIONS.*]—The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, he thought it necessary to fix upon some specific day, beyond which private petitions would not be received by the house, in order to prevent the inconvenience which frequently took place in consequence of the too long extension of the time generally allowed for that purpose. He wished, however, to put off such limitation to such a day as should leave no room for complaints or excuse to any person desiring to petition, and he at the same time was anxious, that it should be generally understood, that no further time would be allowed. This arrangement he was urged to propose from a recollection of the trouble too often occasioned by the great overflow of private business at that period of the sessions, when a quantity of important public affairs was to be at-

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, November 29.

[*MINUTES.*]—Mr. Hurst brought up the report of the Committee on the expiring

tended to. The right hon. gent. concluded with moving, that the 24th of February next should be the last day fixed upon for the acceptance of private petitions. This motion was agreed to.

[WATERFORD ELECTION COMMITTEE.]—Mr. *Deverell*, a member of the Waterford Election Committee, rose to move, that James Pedley, Esq. one of the members of the said committee, be excused his attendance on that committee, as his presence was necessary elsewhere, on account of the death of a near relation, and private business of a very urgent nature.

The *Speaker* informed the hon. member, that the usual mode of proceeding on such occasions, was, that the member who moved the leave of absence should come forward to the table, and state in writing the grounds upon which he rested his motion. That he should verify these grounds upon oath, and that the house would decide on the propriety of acceding to the motion.—The hon. member having accordingly approached the table, and deposed upon oath the grounds of his motion,

The *Speaker* acquainted the house that the grounds of the motion were, that James Pedley, Esq., was called to Jamaica by very urgent private affairs. That he had taken his passage on board a vessel that was to sail from Portsmouth for that island, and that he had received a letter intimating to him that the ship was ready to sail without delay.

Mr. *Deverell*, after stating these grounds, moved, that James Pedley, Esq. have leave of absence from further attendance on the Waterford Committee.—On the question being put,

The *Attorney General* rose, and observed how painful a task it must be to any man to oppose a motion supported on such grounds as those upon which the present motion was rested. But the house must feel how essential it was to pause before a precedent of such importance should be established. He certainly could not now pretend to make up his mind upon the question, and should feel it his duty to take advice upon the point, before he gave it his assent. The learned gent. then proceeded to observe, that the Waterford Committee was already reduced to twelve—that should the leave of absence now solicited, be granted, the number would be eleven, within two of the number absolutely necessary for prosecuting the business before the committee. Thus might a complete suspension of the most essential business of the House of Commons be brought entirely at a stand; be-

sides sickness, and other equally embarrassing difficulties, might preclude the attendance of the remaining members. which might induce a total suspension of the most important and essential proceedings. Under that impression, he felt it his duty to move that the debate on the motion be adjourned till to-morrow.—The question was put on this amendment and agreed to.

[BARRACKS.]—Admiral *Berkeley*, seeing the Secretary at War in his place, rose to ask a question respecting the mode in which the house were to be informed of the expense of the barrack department. When he had inquired into this matter yesterday, an hon. gent. (Mr. Vansittart) had not been able to give him an answer which he could consider satisfactory. What he desired to be informed of was, whether the expense of the barrack establishment was mentioned in the general estimates to be laid before the house. The contracts for the building of barracks were enormous, particularly in the part of the country (Sussex) where he had lately resided. At a time when the general expenses of the country were so great, it was of importance to have the expense of contracts fully considered. With the view of bringing the matter under consideration, it was, however, previously necessary that the point to which he had referred should be explained.

The *Secretary at War* (Mr. Bragge) could not at present give a decided opinion in what manner the estimates for the barrack department would be brought forward. He could mention, however, generally, that it was not intended to include them in the estimates for the expense of the army. As to the amount of the contracts, he should only observe, that they were formed on principles of as strict economy as government could obtain. It was not to be supposed, that in the present circumstances of the country such works could be executed at as cheap a rate as in other periods. Labour had necessarily increased in price, and the difficulty of procuring workmen to complete the works with sufficient celerity, naturally enhanced the demands of those who contracted with government.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, November 30.

[MINUTES.]—Their lordships met this day pursuant to adjournment.—The Lord Chancellor informed the house, that his Majesty had been pleased to return a most gracious answer to their lordships' address,

which was ordered to be entered on the journals of the house. It was nearly to the same effect as the answer made to the address of the House of Commons.—The hearing of certain appeal causes were then severally ordered for the ensuing week ; after which the Lord Chancellor informed their lordships that he had some matters of consequence to communicate which respected their privileges. Strangers were in course ordered to withdraw ; and after a short interval the house adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,
Wednesday, November 30.

[MINUTES.]—Colonel Stewart took the oaths and his seat.—The Speaker acquainted the house, that the petitions complaining of undue elections, and the returns to the boroughs of Hull, Leominster, Shaftesbury, and Boston, had not been renewed in the present session of Parliament, pursuant to the provisions of the 28th of his present Majesty : and that he had certified to his Majesty's court of exchequer, that the recognizances in these cases had been forfeited.—General Barrett brought up an enclosure bill, which was ordered to be read a first time.—Mr. Manning brought up the report of the committee to whom the petition of the London Dock Company had been referred, and obtained leave to bring in a bill to allow the said company to raise by loan, or otherwise, a sum of 500,000*l.* in addition to their original capital of 1,200,000*l.*—Sir P. Stephens, in a Committee of Supply, moved, that it be the opinion of the committee that 100,000 seamen, including marines, be voted for the year 1804. — That a sum not exceeding 2,405,000*l.* be granted to his Majesty, for wages for these 100,000 men, for thirteen lunar months, at the rate of 1*l.* 17*s.* per man per month ; that a sum not exceeding 2,470,000*l.* be granted for victuals for them for thirteen lunar months, at the rate of 1*l.* 18*s.* per man per month ; that a sum not exceeding 3,900,000*l.* be granted for wear and tear of ships for that complement of men for thirteen lunar months, at the rate of 3*l.* per man per month ; that a sum not exceeding 325,000*l.* be granted for ordnance for the sea service, for that complement of men for thirteen lunar months, at the rate of 5*s.* per man per quarter.—The resolutions were all agreed to ; and the house being resumed, the report was ordered to be received to-morrow.—Mr. Secretary Yorke gave notice, that he should on Friday next, move for leave to bring in

two bills, to continue, for a time to be limited, two bills of last session, for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act ; and for the suppression of rebellion in Ireland.—Mr. Vansittart moved that there be laid before the house the following estimates : An estimate of the expense of the hire of transports, from January 7, to December 31, 1804 ; An estimate of the expenses of prisoners of war, in health, for the same period ; An estimate of the money that will probably be wanted for sick prisoners of war, for thirteen lunar months, from January 7, 1804.—The motions were all agreed to, and an address ordered to be presented by such members as were of his Majesty's Privy Council, that his Majesty would be graciously pleased to order the said estimates to be laid before the house.

[EAST-INDIA BONDS.] — Lord Castlereagh, pursuant to his notice on a former day, rose to submit his motion to the house, on the subject of the East-India Company's bonds. The house would be aware of the importance of the measure he had to propose, inasmuch as the value of the East-India Company's capital was materially influenced by the circumstances under which their securities were circulated in the market. The object of the bill he meant to bring forward, would be to place India bonds, as nearly as possible, on the same footing as Exchequer bills, and the operation of it, of course, would extend to two points, in which they differed from such government securities. The first point related to the manner in which the duty charged under the property-tax act was levied on income, arising from such property, which rendered it less desirable to the holder, and of course, tended to depreciate its value. As the tax was levied under the provisions of that act, the directors were authorised to deduct the shilling in the pound from the interest payable on India bonds ; so that, whatever may be the income of the holder, the full amount was in this instance to be levied, even though he should not possess 150*l.* per annum. Such a mode of levying the tax, operated directly to diminish the convenience of such property, and consequently to depreciate its value. It was, however, to be admitted, that the party had a remedy by an application to the commissioners for an abatement in every case, where his rate of income, or other circumstances, should entitle him to such abatement. But, when it was considered how onerous and operose such application must prove to individuals, he trusted the house would not object to the principle for simplifying the mode of col-

lecting the tax, by enabling holders of India bonds to include the interest thereof in the general statement of their income. He was the more confident of this, as the modification would not interfere to any considerable amount with the income duty. The gross amount of India bonds, issued by the company, did not exceed 80,000 or 90,000*l.* the duty upon which would, of course, be under 5,000*l.* and not of sufficient weight with the house to induce it to withhold a facility to the operations of a great commercial company, particularly as the just amount of the duty would not be eventually affected thereby. This was one object of his measure; the other regarded the rate of interest which India bonds bear, with reference to the interest payable on Exchequer bills. The company was by law prohibited from giving more than five per cent. on their bonds, whereas Exchequer bills bore a rate of interest per day, which amounted annually to 5*l.* 6*s.* 6*d.* per cent. This circumstance rendered the property in India bonds, less desirable than other property capable of producing a higher rate of interest, and was of course injurious to the company; besides, it was material that in time of war the bonds of the company should not be ousted from the market. Though the rate of interest had been limited by law, the noble Lord was sure it had never been in the intention of the legislature to place India bonds under disadvantages, to which no other public securities were liable. He was aware, that it might be urged, that there ought to be some distinction between the interests of the public and that of a commercial body, but he was confident the legislature would not look upon the India company as a body wholly mercantile. Their interests were so closely interwoven with the interests of the public at large, which was to enjoy a participation of their resources, that the public could not be a gainer while the company was a loser. His object, therefore, was to enable the India company to give an interest on their bonds, not exceeding the rate of interest which exchequer bills may bear at any time, in order that they may enjoy their fair proportion in the market for the circulating medium. He did not see any necessity to trouble the house further, he therefore, should move "for leave to bring in a bill to regulate India bonds, with regard to the rate of interest and duty payable thereon."—Leave given.

[*BANK RESTRICTION BILL.*].—The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* after moving, "that the several acts imposing a restriction on the issue of cash in the payments made by the

Bank be read," stated, that it was not his intention to preface the motion he meant to submit to the house with many introductory observations. There had, on a former occasion, existed considerable objections to the measure for confirming the order of council by which the restriction of the issues of cash from the Bank had been imposed. He was himself of opinion, that the measure was a wise one; and whatever doubts might have existed, in the first instance, as to its expediency, had been fully and satisfactorily obviated in the discussion which had taken place, on the subject's being brought before the house. But though doubts had been entertained as to the propriety of the measure, during a period of peace, he had never heard its policy questioned during a period of war. Under the impression, therefore, that no doubts existed on the subject, he should take it for granted, that no objection would be made, in the present instance, to a renewal of the measure. It was satisfactory to know that the credit of the Bank had remained firm and unshaken, during the past experience of the measure, and that its sufficiency to make good its engagements, both was, and is, unaffected by even the slightest suspicion. It was highly to the credit of the Bank, too, that it had not availed itself of the dispositions of the act, to issue a quantity of paper exceeding the amount of its capital; or abused the discretion, which a measure essential to the public welfare, necessarily left for its own private ends. It was, however, expedient, that the house should, from time to time, be made acquainted with the quantity of paper in circulation, and he proposed to move for an account of that which was actually in circulation at different periods during the last year; but he should first move, "for leave to bring in a bill to continue, for a time to be limited, the restriction on the issues of cash by the Bank of England."

Mr. *Jekyll*.—Sir; I do not rise to oppose the motion of the right hon. gent. but to direct his attention and that of the house, to the lamentable state to which the public are reduced by the want of circulating specie. The shameful practice of hoarding up cash, has been carried to such an excessive pitch, that it is with great difficulty specie can be procured for the common purposes of life. I am sorry to observe the prevalence of this ungenerous feeling, at a crisis which calls for every possible exertion; and I am assured, from the respectable authority of a principal banking-house, that, if the practice be not put a stop to, bankers

will in a short time, not be able to procure specie for the fractional parts of change. I have seen too, in a newspaper of this morning, some resolutions of a respectable corporation,* calculated to meet the evil, and recommending the acceptance of dollars at a certain rate, and of French crowns and half crowns in change. These observations I have thrown out, Sir, merely to call the attention of the right hon. gent. to a grievance, which loudly calls for legislative interference.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* agreed with the hon. gent. that the evil of which he complained, but too certainly existed; and assured him, that it had been under the consideration of his Majesty's government. He admitted that the hon. gent. had commented justly on the baseness of such a practice, at such a crisis. The remedy, however, rested with individuals, who might easily correct s practice, that was as inconsistent with public spirit, as it was with the duty of a good citizen.—The motion was then put, and leave given to bring in the bill. After which the *Chancellor of the Exchequer* moved, "that there be laid before the house an account of the amount of Bank of England notes in circulation on the 1st of June, 1st of August, 1st of October, and 25th of November, 1803; distinguishing the amount of the value of those below 5l." Ordered.

[WATERFORD ELECTION COMMITTEE.]

Mr. *Deverell* moved the order of the day for renewing the debate on the motion for excusing Mr. *Pedley* from his attendance on the Waterford committee.

The *Speaker* said, he conceived it to be his duty to state to the house, that affairs of an urgent nature having called the hon. gent. mentioned in the motion, to the island of Jamaica, and that the gentleman having long since taken his passage, it was moved that he obtain leave of absence from the committee on the Waterford election, on

which he was appointed. The question being put,

Mr. *Deverell* rose. He recapitulated what he had said on the preceding evening. He stated farther, that the hon. gent. alluded to had spent seventeen or eighteen years in the island of Jamaica, and had only lately left it. It was scarcely probable, therefore, that a man in such circumstances should have left his affairs in such a situation as not again to require his personal presence. The hon. gent. entered further into a minute discussion of the observations of the *Attorney General* on the preceding evening, and endeavoured to obviate that right hon. gentleman's objections. He stated, that it would be a very hard case, indeed, if gentlemen should be excluded from attendance on their own private and most interesting affairs; affairs in which their happiness and personal respectability were deeply implicated, merely because they had been appointed on a committee, the business of which might be otherwise executed without injury to the public. He appealed to the feelings of the House. Was it a case to which any gent. present would wish to submit? He alluded to a precedent, where nine out of fifteen had sat and transacted the business of an election committee, whereas even in case of the hon. gentleman's absence, there would still according to the *Attorney General*, be eleven on the Waterford committee.

The *Attorney General* rose. It was far, he said, from his intention to oppose the private interests of any member of that house, and in regard to the gentleman alluded to, he would be the last to throw any obstruction in his way. So much was this the case indeed, he said, that if the question were at this moment put, it would be more agreeable to find that the gentleman should obtain leave of absence than that he should not. To be refused, indeed, in such circumstances, he thought would be a very hard case; and let it be brought home to the feelings of any gentleman here present, he was as sensible as the hon. gent. who spoke last, that no one could deny the force of his argument. The hon. gent. had stated that he had said the whole of the business would be at a stand, should more of the members be absent than now were. This was not directly the idea he had expressed. He had meant to say, that if one, two, or three, were permitted to absent themselves upon business, others might claim the same privilege, and of course no reliance could be placed upon any committee ap-

* The following is the circumstance to which the hon. member alluded:—In consequence of the great inconvenience experienced at Portsmouth from the scarcity of cash, a meeting was held, pursuant to advertisement, at the Guildhall of that place, on the 22d of November. The mayor presided; and, after some discussion on the means of alleviating the difficulties and inconveniences so seriously felt at Portsmouth and Portsea, for the want of gold and silver for the purposes of trade, it was unanimously resolved, that dollars should be admitted into temporary currency, at 4s. 9d. each, but that no person should engage to take more than four in one payment; and French crowns at 5s. and half crowns at 2s. 6d:

pointed by the House; and such really was the case in the present instance; three had already dropped from the committee in question, and this motion went to authorize the absence of a fourth. The right hon. gent. concluded by saying, that where the private interests of the individual, and those of the public were put in competition, his own private feelings would be too ready to lead him to give a preference to the individual interest; but, at the same time, he could not conceal his anxiety, that the house should not be forward to establish precedents that were too likely to be followed, to the injury of the public service. With regard to precedents, he had taken much pains to search for them; and he could find no precedent, where a member for private business was indulged, but in a temporary absence; in which case, the committee was adjourned till it could have the benefit of his attendance. Painful as it would be to him, he should, therefore, vote against the motion.

Mr. *W. Dundas* rose, and requested that the house would pause, before it should determine in a case of such importance, where they had nothing before them, but the general assertion of an individual, to direct their judgment. Suppose, he said, I wish to go to Scotland? If you establish a precedent of this kind, will it not be natural for me to plead business, and to direct your attention to this very precedent, which you are about to create.

Mr. *Bragge* observed, that it must be in the recollection of the house, that there was no precedent in England that could apply to this motion, and as committees for the trial of Irish elections were now in this country, no arguments could be adduced on the present question, but those of expediency only. It therefore remained with the house to establish or not, as they should think proper, a precedent on the present occasion.

The *Speaker*, before he put the question, stated to the house, the number of precedents of absence, granted to members, from committees, to be eight; four of which, were for total absence, in consequence of the death of near relations. Of the other four, two were for private business, and but for two days; and the committees were in both cases adjourned till the expiration of the two days. The remaining two were, first, the case of the Okehampton petition; Mr. *Pelham*, one of the members of the committee for trying which, was also water-bailiff to the court of sewers, and had obtained a total release from attendance on the committee, in consequence of his presence being

essential to the discharge of his other duties. The second was the case of *Shaftesbury*, in which case, Sir *Richard Worsley*, who was also mayor and returning officer of another place, obtained a release from attendance on the committee, in consideration of the calls of duty in his corporation. The question being put by the *Speaker*, there was a call to divide the house, when there appeared for the motion 45, and against it, 54. The motion, of course, was negatived by a majority of 9.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, December 1.

Their lordships met at the usual hour. Certain accounts, relative to the bounties granted by *Queen Anne*, were laid on the table. The house then went into a committee of privileges. Strangers were ordered to withdraw, and soon after an adjournment took place.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, December 1.

[*MINUTES.*] — Mr. *Smith* informed the house, that his Majesty had been waited upon with the address of this house, and had ordered the proper officers to prepare and lay before the house, the several estimates accordingly. — Sir *P. Stephens* presented estimates of the expense of maintaining prisoners of war, sick and in health; also, an estimate of the expense of transport service, for the year 1804. These estimates were ordered to lie on the table; and Sir *P. Stephens* gave notice, that he should move them in the committee of supply to-morrow. — Mr. *Hobhouse* brought up the report of the committee of supply. The resolutions were agreed to, *nem. con.* — Lord *Castlereagh* brought in his bill, for regulating the interest on *East India* bonds. The bill was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time on Monday, and to be printed. Mr. *Vansittart* brought in the bill for continuing the restriction, on payments in specie by the Bank of England. Read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time to-morrow. — Mr. *Hobhouse* brought up the report of the committee of Expiring Laws. The resolutions were for the continuation of the act 39 Geo. III. for prohibiting the exportation, and encouraging the importation of corn; the act for regulating the trade with *Malta*; the act of last session, relating to the drawback on the exportation of sugar; and the act relating to the exportation of sugar to *Ireland*. The resolutions were post-

poned, and referred to a committee of the whole house to sit to-morrow.—The house went into a committee on Mr. Jarvis's bill, for preventing the desertion and collusive arrests of seamen. Several verbal amendments were made, the blanks were filled up, and the report ordered to be received to-morrow.—Mr. Vansittart moved, that to-morrow the house should resolve itself into a committee, to consider of ways and means, for raising the supply granted to his Majesty.—The Chancellor of the Exchequer gave notice, that to-morrow, in the committee of ways and means, he should move, that leave be given to bring in a bill to empower his majesty to raise five millions, by loan, on exchequer bills, for the service of the year 1804.—The Chancellor of the Exchequer gave notice, that to-morrow, in the committee of ways and means, he should move the land and malt taxes, for the year 1804.—The Chancellor of the Exchequer moved, that there be laid before the house an account of the outstanding exchequer bills, on the 1st December, 1802, and 1st December, 1803, respectively.

[STIPENDIARY CURATES BILL.]—Sir William Scott rose to move for leave to bring in a bill to encourage the residence of stipendiary curates. It would, he said, be in the recollection of gentlemen, that a bill had been brought forward on this subject last year, which had passed that house, but was rejected in another place, on account of a money provision, which had been annexed to it, of such a nature as to be conceived inconsistent with the forms of that place. He had the satisfaction to state, that it was not now necessary to annex to the bill any such provision, as intimation had been given, that it was intended to bring forward a separate measure, for the purpose of providing, in a less objectionable way, for those of that deserting class of men, the stipendiary curates, who should be displaced, by the operation of the bill for enforcing the residence of the clergy. The bill, which he should propose, would, therefore, be the same with that which the house had passed in the last session, with the addition of a clause, which would facilitate its operation, and the omission of the clause, in consequence of which, the former bill had been rejected in the upper house. If leave should be given to bring in the bill, his intention was, that it should be read a first and second time, as soon as the forms would admit, and then printed and left some time for consideration.—Leave being given, the bill was accordingly brought in, and read a first time, and

ordered to be read a second time to-morrow. It is then to be committed, in order to fill up the blanks *pro forma*, when it is to be printed; and after a sufficient interval for consideration, to be recommitted for discussion.

[CURATES RELIEF BILL.]—The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* (who was not in the house when Sir William Scott made the above motion) said, he understood that a motion had just been made, and leave given, to bring in a bill similar to that of last session, to encourage the residence of stipendiary curates. It would be in the recollection of gentlemen, that in the progress of the former bill, a motion had been made, for the house to go into a committee, to consider of the propriety of making compensation to such curates as should be deprived of their cures by the bill for enforcing the residence of the clergy. The provision, which the committee thought it advisable to make, had been incorporated with the bill, and the bill had been rejected in the other house as informal. It was now designed, to bring forward a plan, for the relief of these deserting men, in a separate bill. He should therefore move, "that the house should to-morrow, resolve itself into a committee of the whole house, to consider of the expediency of affording a temporary relief to such curates as have been or shall be displaced, in consequence of the act of last session, for enforcing the residence of the clergy." He was authorised to state, that the proposition had the consent of his Majesty.

[FORTIFICATION OF LIVERPOOL.]—Mr. Dent moved for leave to bring up a petition from the merchants of Liverpool, praying for leave, to bring in a bill, to enable them to fortify their harbour and town at their own expense.—The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, the petition was recommended by his Majesty, so far as the crown was concerned.—The petition was accordingly brought up and read. It stated, that the commander in chief, and other general officers of that district, had represented the harbour and town of Liverpool to be in a very inadequate state of defence. The mayor, bailiffs, and other officers of the corporation, having, on their part, offered to raise a great portion of the necessary fortifications at their own expense, the merchants wished to contribute to carry the plan into full effect, so that floating batteries may be stationed across the mouth of the harbour, and by erecting batteries on such points of the coast as were thought to require fortification. For this purpose voluntary donations had been sub-

scribed, but the amount of them being insufficient, it was wished to raise the remainder of the necessary sum by loan, as a security for which the merchants were willing to pledge their ships, and other property. It was to enable them to raise this loan, that the aid of Parliament was required.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that though some of the gentlemen near him had communicated to him the substance of the petition, he was not acquainted with the form of it, till he had heard it read. If he had been aware of the words, in which it was expressed, he would not have exercised in its favour, the discretion which his Majesty had vested in him, to give the approbation of the crown where he should think it called for. What were the avowed designs of the enemy, referred to in the petition; and what the zeal and spirit of the merchants of Liverpool to resist these designs, which he had no doubt were as great as those of any other class of his Majesty's subjects, were matters, into the discussion of which, he was not now disposed to enter. There were, however, words in the petition, which, if the house should order a bill according to the petition, would render that bill objectionable. The petition alluded to works to be raised for the defence of the harbour and town of Liverpool; the house would not countenance the raising of any works without the express order of the King. He gave every credit to the zeal and public spirit, from which the petition originated. This remark, he was called upon to make, by his not being aware of the particulars of the petition when he gave his Majesty's consent; a defeat which the house itself would correct, and which it would allow him to supply. He recollected an instance of a similar petition in 1798. He had not then objected, for he could not make any objection; but his sentiments were such as he now stated, and he was glad to find they had the approbation of the chair. [The Speaker appeared by signs to coincide in the sentiment of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.] It would be for the house to decide, whether it would sanction the precedent then established.

Mr. *Creevey* thought it never had been conceived by the inhabitants of Liverpool, that their town and harbour were particularly in want of fortifications. During the last war, and all former wars, they looked upon themselves as perfectly secure; but now the commander in chief of their district (Prince William of Gloucester) found out that Liverpool was a very vulnerable place, and very much in danger of attack. If, contrary to his own judgment and that of many others,

such fortifications were necessary, let them be defrayed, as they ought to be, by the public; let them not be imposed as a partial and heavy burthen on Liverpool itself, but let them be erected, at the general expense of the nation. It was, besides, an error to conceive that the expense would fall on the majority of the inhabitants, if the money were to be raised in the manner proposed by the petition: it would fall on a very small part of these inhabitants.

Mr. *Dent* moved, that the petition be referred to a committee, to consider the matter thereof, and to report the same as it should appear to them to the house.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* begged to be understood, not to pledge himself to the measure, by giving his Majesty's consent, so far as his Majesty was concerned. He had given it thus qualified, in order not to debar the petition from coming before the house.

Mr. *Dent* said, the measure proposed in the petition, had certainly the sanction of the majority of the most respectable merchants of Liverpool. The town had already raised a considerable sum by subscription. Twenty thousand pounds had been raised, but that was not sufficient; it was to supply the deficiency, that the measure stated in the petition was resorted to. If assistance was necessary, he was sure, though he had no pledge, that it would be afforded. It would have been highly indecent in the town, when informed by so high an authority as its commander in chief, and the general officers under him, not to shew the greatest alacrity to come forward in the most liberal manner.—The petition was referred to a committee.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, December 2d.

[*MINUTES.*]—On the motion of the Duke of Norfolk, the Zouch peerage was ordered to be taken into further consideration on the first Tuesday in February.—On the motion of Lord Walsingham, the Rous peerage was ordered to be taken into consideration on the third Tuesday in the same month.

[*PAROCHIAL CLERGY.*]—The Duke of Norfolk gave notice, that it was his intention to submit to the consideration of the house, a bill for preventing the arrest of parochial clergymen, while actually engaged in the duties of their respective cures: a bill, for their relief, had been introduced in that house last session, but had not been entertained, on the idea that it was to be esteemed a money bill: Such a bill, however, was now pending in the other house, and he

should avail himself of the opportunity, when that bill came to be considered by their lordships, to introduce one to the effect he had mentioned. Adjourned till Monday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, December 2.

[MINUTES.]—Mr. Wharton, from the Bank of England, presented at the bar, “an account of the number and amount of bank notes in circulation on the 1st of June, the 1st of August, the 1st of October, and the 25th of November, 1803, distinguishing those under 5l.” Ordered to lie on the table, and to be printed.—On the motion of Sir W. Scott, the stipendiary curates bill was read a second time, committed *pro forma*, the blanks filled up, the report received, and the bill as amended, ordered to be taken into further consideration on Wednesday next.—Mr. Hobhouse brought up the report of the seamen’s desertion bill, which was agreed to, and the bill ordered to be read a third time on Monday next.—On the motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the bank restriction bill was read a second time, and ordered to be committed to-morrow.—The House then resolved itself into a committee of ways and means; in which, the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved the following resolutions; that the duty on malt, mum, cyder, and perry, imposed by the 43d of his present Majesty, which was to expire on the 24th of June, 1804, be further continued till the 24th of June, 1805; that the 4s in the pound to be raised on all pensions, offices, &c. till the 25th of March, 1804, do continue to be raised on the same till the 25th of March, 1805; that the duties on sugar, tobacco, snuff, &c. imposed by the different acts of Parliament, do continue to be further raised upon the same till the 25th of March, 1805. These resolutions were severally put and agreed to.—The Secretary at War presented an estimate of the expence of guards and garrisons, which was ordered to lie on the table. He then gave notice, that on Friday next, he should submit the army estimates to the consideration of the house.—Sir Philip Stephens moved the order of the day, for the house to resolve itself into a committee of the whole house, to consider further of a supply to be granted to his Majesty; which being read, he moved, That the several accounts presented, of the ordinaries and extraordinaries of the navy, be referred to the said committee. Ordered.—

The house having formed itself into a committee of the whole house, Sir Philip moved, that a sum, not exceeding 2,670,000l. 9s. 9d. be granted to his Majesty for the ordinaries of the navy, including the half-pay of navy and marine officers, for 1804. Granted; that 948,520l. be granted for building, re-building, and repairing ships of war in his Majesty’s dock-yards, over and above the ordinary wear and tear, for the year 1804. Granted.—The chairman was ordered to report progress, and to ask leave to sit again.—Report ordered to be received to-morrow morning.—Sir Philip Stephens gave notice, that he should, on Monday, move to refer the estimates of the probable expense of transports, prisoners of war, &c. to a committee of the whole house.—Mr. Vansittart moved the orders of the day, on the report of the committee on expiring laws, which being read, he moved the continuance of all the last regulations respecting corn, permitting the importation, and prohibiting the exportation of it; renewing also the regulations respecting the drawback on the exportation of sugars, &c., and renewing also the regulations respecting various articles that have been permitted to be imported without payment of duty; renewing likewise all the last regulations respecting the trade, &c. of Malta till after peace, &c. which were all agreed to.—Mr. Vansittart moved for leave to bring in a bill to indemnify such persons in Great Britain as have omitted to qualify themselves for offices and employments, and justices of the peace, who have omitted to deliver in their qualifications, officers of boroughs, &c. as required by law, &c. Granted.—Mr. Vansittart then moved, That there be laid before the house an estimate of the charges of barracks in Great Britain and Ireland, from the 25th of December, 1803, to the 25th of December, 1804. Ordered.—He concluded by moving an address to his Majesty, praying that he would be graciously pleased to give directions for that purpose. Agreed to.—Mr. Corry gave notice that he would to-morrow, move for leave to bring in a bill for continuing the acts relative to the importation of provisions to Ireland, and also for continuing the sugar act.—The right hon. gent. then observed, that as the act which passed last session, respecting the issue of what is called in Ireland silver-notes, would expire on the 1st of January, 1804, and as he thought it necessary to wait for information, from gentlemen of that country, respecting the state of that species of circulating credit, he should, on Monday, move for leave to bring in a bill to suspend, for a limited time, that prohibitory act, in order

to give Parliament an opportunity to receive the desired information.

[*CURATES RELIEF BILL.*—The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* moved the order of the day, that the house do now resolve itself into a committee, to consider of the most effectual and expedient mode of affording a temporary relief to curates, who might be deprived of their cures, by the operation of the clergy residence act, passed last session.

Sir *Robert Buxton* expressed his opinion, that this was a business which deserved the most serious attention of the house. Nobody, said the honourable baronet, can feel more than I do, the inconveniences to which that valuable body of men, the stipendiary curates, may for a time be subjected, if no relief can be granted them by the legislature. But whilst I look on this side of the question, and admit the expediency of affording relief to these men, who must otherwise labour under considerable difficulties, I ought not to neglect to glance a little at the other side, and observe the circumstances that form more than a counter-balance to the necessities of the curates, and that is the necessities of the country. In the present situation of the country, so burthened with taxes, to support the arduous contest in which we are engaged, nothing can excuse a compliance with an application of this sort, but the most absolute necessity. In the present instance, I am by no means satisfied, that such a necessity does exist. The clergy who before kept curates, but who are now compelled to reside on their livings, may very well spare a maintenance for those who were in the habit of performing the duty of their functions, until another provision shall occur. The clergy are certainly able to afford this expense, as it is notorious, that the value of their livings have of late received a very ample increase. These few observations, I have thought it my duty to throw out at present; at the same time pledging myself, that whenever any subject of expenditure, that is not indispensably necessary, does come before the house in the present circumstances of the country, I shall uniformly and strenuously object to it.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* agreed, that nothing could be more commendable than the cautious jealousy expressed by the hon. Baronet, respecting the application of the public money. He was anxious, however, that the house should rightly understand the object of the present motion. It was merely meant to do away an informality which has crept into a similar bill, brought forward last session, even after the commencement of

hostilities, and which passed through all its stages in that house, without having met with one dissentient voice. When the bill for enforcing the residence of the clergy, was under consideration last session, it was generally acknowledged, that its operation must press hard upon a certain description of curates, who might be reduced, both themselves and their families, to great distress, by the passing of that bill. It was not then, neither is it now, intended, to make full and general compensation to all of that description, who may be deprived of their cures; but merely to rescue from the most ruinous indigence, many meritorious curates, who may be more particularly injured by the non-residence bill. He was as sensible as any gentleman could be, of the propriety of observing a system of rigid economy; but he was as equally satisfied, that the house would not wish that any system of that nature should stand in the way of the generosity, he had almost said the justice, which certain individuals, under certain circumstances, might have to expect at their hands. The house would, no doubt, the more incline to that opinion, when they understood that the sum to be proposed, for answering this object, was not to exceed 8,000*l.* and that that sum, small as it was, would be under the restrictions imposed by a bill which had already received the unanimous approbation of the house. He had only to repeat that the object of the bill went merely to procure a temporary relief for indigent curates, and that the amount of that relief was not to exceed 8,000*l.*—The house, having agreed to the motion, the right hon. gent. moved, “that a sum not exceeding 8,000*l.* be granted for the relief of such curates as should be deprived of their cures in consequence of the bill compelling the residence of the incumbents.” This motion was agreed to and the resolution immediately reported.

[*EXCHEQUER BILLS.*—The *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, in a committee of ways and means, drew the attention of the committee to the notice which he had given yesterday, of his intention to move this day, for leave to issue exchequer bills to the amount of five million. He stated, that he had a satisfaction in mentioning, what he had no doubt the committee would feel a pleasure in hearing, that this motion, if agreed to, was the only application that would be made, for any supply, until a very advanced period of the session. He had also to observe with pleasure, that all the outstanding bills of 1802 were now paid off; and that those only were in circulation, that were issued on the credit

of the services of 1803, 4,500,000*l.* of which remained to be paid off. If the committee acceded to the present motion, there would also be an opportunity for the issue of new exchequer bills, for which there was now a considerable demand. So much would consequently be taken from the supply of the year; but the whole of what he now moved for would be necessary for the public service, till the advanced period of the session, when the whole of the supply was voted. If particular information was called for on any of these points, he should be ready to give every explanation in his power. He concluded by moving, "that the sum of five millions be raised by loan on exchequer bills, for the service of the year 1804." This motion being agreed to, the house resumed, and the report was ordered to be received to-morrow.

[SUSPENSION OF HABEAS CORPUS ACT IN IRELAND.]—*Mr. Secretary Yorke.* I rise, Sir, in consequence of a notice which I gave a few days ago, for leave to bring in two bills to continue two acts; the one for suspending the Habeas Corpus Act, and the other for the re-enactment of Martial Law in Ireland. The House may be assured, that it is with the sincerest regret for the circumstances which render this measure necessary, that I now come forward to perform this painful duty. I am sorry to be obliged to propose any measure that may trench upon the liberties of the subject, or any of those blessings which this country justly values at so high a rate. But, Sir, it is the misfortune of the times in which we are destined to live, that we are not permitted to enjoy our lives, our liberties, or our possessions, without being daily called upon to sacrifice some part of our privileges in order to preserve the remainder, to sacrifice the best blood of the country in support of the contest in which we are engaged, and to abridge our liberties in order to preserve the existence of liberty itself. But this is no more than our ancestors often thought proper to do. There exists, however, this lamentable difference, that the periods during which it was necessary to resort to measures of this sort, were extremely short with them; but we can never rest in complete security, nor think either our privileges or our lives in safety, while France, after spreading devastation and death over her tributaries on the continent, looks with malignant envy on this happy spot, and longs to extend her fiend-like fangs to crush us also, and level us

with the lowest of her slaves. It will be needless for me to state more particularly than I have done the object of these bills. It will be recollected that they passed towards the conclusion of last session, in consequence of a message from his Majesty, stating the insurrection that had broken out in the city of Dublin, and the atrocious circumstances with which it was attended. The house very properly passed those acts without any hesitation; when passed, they gave confidence to the loyal inhabitants of Ireland, and enabled them to suppress the rebellion with celerity. The particular circumstances which gave rise to and accompanied that most unhappy transaction, has now been developed by the trials of several of the leaders and their adherents, before the ordinary courts of judicature, and according to the ordinary forms of law. The proceedings on these occasions have been published, and to them I refer the house for information whereon to found their judgment, as to the nature and extent of the conspiracy, as well as to the expediency of the present motion. Exclusive of the information contained in these trials, his Majesty's government are in possession of other facts, which the house must feel it would be highly improper to attempt to detail at the present moment. I may, however, be permitted to state, that notwithstanding the declaration of one of them (Emmett), I have every reason to believe, that the leaders of that insurrection were connected with persons residing in France, and those persons, traitors, immediately connected with the French government, if the conspirators were not immediately connected with it themselves. It is also clear, that some of the traitors who were in France, came over to Ireland for the purpose of exciting rebellion, and that they calculated upon the renewal of hostilities between this country and France, and chose that moment for exciting rebellion, as the most favourable crisis for putting in execution their nefarious designs. It is, indeed, clear, from all that has come to the knowledge of government, that the great object of the French government was to foster and increase a treason and rebellion in Ireland, with a hope of distracting and dividing the British empire, and finally leading to the subversion of the country: but the perfidy of the enemy was defeated, and his hope was vain. With respect to the events of the 23d of July, the details are before the public, and it is not necessary to enlarge upon them. The

horrid tale is known; and, perhaps, in all the history of violence, madness, and folly which the world ever presented; there never existed treason more foul, and insurrection more unprovoked, leaders more contemptible, assassination more atrocious, or crimes more horrible.—What followed is extremely well known: most of the leaders have been brought to justice before the ordinary tribunals, which these miscreants wished to put an end to, and exterminate; as evidently appears by their horrible assassination of one of the brightest ornaments of those tribunals. I hope my right hon. friend (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) will shortly have it in command from his Majesty, to lay the situation of the family of the much respected, and much lamented nobleman to whom I have alluded (Kilwarden), before the house.—Sir, it becomes my duty to propose the continuance of the acts in question, and I hope that, as far as concerns the manner in which these acts have been made use of, there will be no objection. All the criminals have, notwithstanding the powers vested in the Irish government, been tried in the ordinary form, except in one solitary instance, where a person who endeavoured to seduce a soldier from his allegiance, was justly and properly tried by martial law. Of the necessity for these measures no man can entertain a doubt, who has taken any trouble to make himself acquainted with the state of Ireland, or who is at all aware of the views of the French government, with whom it has been a long favoured plan to attack the empire on the side of Ireland. The enemy is aware that it is only by dividing and diverting the strength of this country, that she can insure success; for united, the British empire single handed, is more than a match for all France. Provided parliament and government be on their guard, there is little reason to fear either foreign or domestic enemies. As to the latter, indeed, I am persuaded there are few, very few now to be found in this country, I regret that there are more in Ireland, although their numbers are greatly diminished. But let their numbers be great or small, they must be met with firmness and resolution. They must be made sensible that this house will never compromise with traitors, nor suffer them to clothe themselves with the whole armour of the law, whilst they are secretly attacking the government, and the senate, and all loyal subjects, with the concealed weapons of assassination.—I therefore move, Sir, “that

leave be given to bring in a bill to continue, for a time to be limited, the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland.”

The Hon. *C. Hely Hutchinson*.—With most of the sentiments expressed by the right hon. gent. who has just sat down, I rise to declare my perfect concurrence; and I am happy to feel justified in assuring the house, that the conduct of the government of Ireland since the insurrection, meets with my entire approbation. Their firmness and humanity; their activity and attention, entitles them to the utmost praise. They have in a great measure pursued that line of policy, which the wise and just would always recommend to be observed towards Ireland. Their temper and lenity have tended to cultivate the good opinion of the people; which was precisely the course, which, at the close of the last session of parliament, I had entreated should be adopted; an exhortation by the bye, which seemed to have been much misconceived; and for offering which, I became the subject of severe and unmerited censures, from particular quarters: several paragraphs (I should be ashamed to suppose from authority) were inserted in some of the Dublin papers, and also in those of this city, tending to decry the individual who had attempted to call the attention of parliament to the affairs of Ireland. I was quite unconscious, on that occasion, of having given any provocation to the friends of the noble earl, at the head of the government of that country. Such was not my object; as it was, and is, matter of indifference to me, by whom the offices of state are filled, provided government be well administered: in the mode of that administration I am, so far as relates to Ireland, particularly interested. Connected to her by all the sacred ties which can bind an individual to his country, strengthened by a respect for the talents, a regard for the virtues, and a warm sympathy in the wishes of its inhabitants: eager as I feel for their welfare, rejoicing in their prosperity, and participating in their afflictions, I cannot but sincerely lament the necessity which ministers feel themselves under, for again resorting to parliament, for the measures now proposed. But that, under the present circumstances of that unhappy country, it is advisable thus to strengthen the hands of the executive, I cannot entertain a doubt: and I feel the less reluctance in again entrusting the Irish government with these extraordinary powers, when I reflect upon the moderation and lenity with which they have

hitherto been exerted: and having on a former occasion expressed my regret, that the conciliating conduct, and uniform attentions of Lord Hardwick and his family to the people of Ireland, had not been met by that co-operation of legislative exertion, which I for one had anxiously recommended, I cannot but lament, that this my avowed opinion, should have been either totally suppressed, or perverted,—I trust, I shall not, in the few observations I am about to make, subject myself to the imputation of wishing improperly to obtrude the discussion of the state of Ireland. Of misrepresentation alone do I feel the least apprehension: on a very late occasion, I had an opportunity of advertg to the situation of that country, I mean when the motion was under consideration for an address to his Majesty, but I abstained from any comment upon the speech from the throne, not wishing to disturb the unanimity, or damp the zeal which prevailed in the house; and because I felt, that at such a period when attacked by the most inveterate enemy, and the most ambitious government, this country ever had to encounter, no man of loyalty, or of understanding, should hesitate to declare his resolution, unburthened by conditions and unalloyed by expressions of discontent, to support his Majesty in the prosecution of a war, in which, in my humble judgment, his empire is necessarily engaged. I was sincerely glad to hear from my Sovereign on the day to which I have alluded, that rebellion had been put down in Ireland, and that the public tranquillity had suffered no farther interruption; and I sincerely joined in the hope, that “such of his deluded subjects as had swerved from their allegiance, had been convinced of their error, and that upon a comparison of the advantages they derive under a free constitution, with the situation of those countries that have fallen under the yoke of the government of France, they will not hesitate to co-operate with his Majesty, in zealously resisting every attack which may be made upon the security and independence of the united kingdom.” Of this “fair return to loyalty,” I could entertain little doubt, were they fully acquainted with the miseries accumulated, on the unfortunate nations who have been forced to wear the galling chains of the republican despot. But I may be suffered, I trust, to hope, that by that passage in his Majesty’s speech, ministers do not mean to hold out an opinion, that because the situation of Ireland may be preferable to that of those countries, pillaged and enslaved by France, that, therefore, it does not require

any improvement. What, I would ask, can the minister mean by this comparison? Is it that because Ireland is less oppressed, less persecuted, that, therefore, its inhabitants should be completely reconciled to the conduct of the British government, and thoroughly satisfied with her condition? Is it possible that it can be seriously designed, from a consideration of the difference in degrees of human misery, to decline entering into the investigation of the affairs of Ireland? If such be the purport of this insinuation, it cannot be too strongly condemned. Such a mode of reasoning could only be justified on the preposterous supposition, that nations should be happy and contented, as long as they see others more wretched than themselves; and it is something new in the history of this country, to derive an argument against any project for ameliorating the condition of its people, from a comparison with the state of other countries, and particularly with such as are subjected to arbitrary government. Would the Irish in 1792 when demanding in the bold tone of freedom, and the irresistible language of reason, the establishment of their rights, have tamely listened to any objection to their claims drawn from a reference to the comparative depression and poverty of their situation but a few years before?—Would the haughty barons of England, who in the 13th century so nobly contended for that charter which forms the basis of British liberty, have consented to have withdrawn their pretensions, and abandoned their claims, had they been remiuded, that their situation was still preferable to that of the barons of France, and of the other neighbouring states? No; they would have indignantly spurned at those, who should have presumed to influence them by such a consideration, and have redoubled their energies for the attainment of their objects. But, to refer to a more modern, and a still more glorious epoch of your history, would those illustrious characters of 1688, who accomplished the ever memorable revolution of that day, which at length clearly ascertained the rights, and irrevocably established the independence and happiness of this realm, would, I ask, an artifice so shallow, a comparison so insulting, have induced them to have been false to their country, to themselves, and to you? If the comparison to which I have alluded, be urged for the purpose of communicating to the people of Ireland, that they have no change in their condition to expect, I cannot refrain from declaring that I fear it will be productive of the worst consequences,

and should be inclined to attribute it to the extreme of folly or of wickedness.—I do tell the right hon. gent. on the treasury bench, that he cannot confidently reckon on the warm and effectual support of the empire in this great struggle, unless he be just to the people.—It was with no small degree of regret, I understood him to have declared, that “he was not aware of the probability” under the present circumstances of any “discussion upon the situation of Ireland” being attended with any other than the “most dangerous consequences.” If it be meant by this observation, that the consideration of these subjects should be postponed till after the conclusion of the war, I assert that such an idea is an insult to the magnanimity and good sense of parliament.—What! shall it be said that at a time, when all the strength which the empire is capable of affording may be necessary, that one important part, known to be diseased, shall be left without care or remedy, and suffered to go on decaying until, become rotten, it be irrecoverably lost? Good God! at a crisis the most awful, in a contest the most tremendous in which this country ever was engaged, likely to be terminated only by the downfall of one of the contending powers, a contest for which we require all the strength and power which unanimity only can afford, at such a moment, to hesitate in adopting a system of conciliation is monstrous!!! Will it be objected that a time of war is unseasonable for the discussion of this important subject: upon what ground?—That there are grievances, and heavy ones too, under which the greater part of the Irish people labour, is not, cannot be disputed; this being admitted, it is unjust to procrastinate the redress of them till the issue of the present contest; for aught we know, to an indefinite period, and that too, without any pledge or hope that even after the termination of the war, the government would be disposed to make concessions or afford relief.—As to the policy of neglecting the state of Ireland during the war, I shall say that it becomes highly criminal, when the right hon. secretary has this moment declared that the British Empire, *provided it were united*, might single-handed, defy the threats with which we are now insulted, and that so convinced of this was the enemy, that he was labouring incessantly to divide us, and to create a party in the empire. Could any stronger argument than this be advanced by me, or those who think with me on the necessity of redressing the grievances of the Irish people as soon as possible? I am of the same

opinion with the right hon. gent., that Buonaparte and his agents are sowing discord, and fomenting the passions of that people in order to distract, divide, and weaken our forces, as well as to embarrass his Majesty’s councils.—Taking this for granted, what shadow of objection can be made against the introduction and discussion of a measure, the object and result of which is to detach from the enemy, those on whose assistance he may rely. No motive, no reasonable cause of discontent ought to be left, on which he may attempt to act.—Here again I must declare, that no system of government however defective, no complaint however founded, can justify the subject at this hour of general danger, when his country, his religion, his laws, and liberties are attacked, in refusing his cordial support to repel the common enemy. — But, with respect to this cant about the time and circumstances proper for a full enquiry into the state of Ireland, I should be glad to know when such circumstances are likely to arise in the estimation of ministers, for, from their conduct heretofore, it seems impossible to calculate; they have been ministers during peace, and during war, during rebellion and after rebellion has been put down. They have, in fact, been nearly three years in power, and have gone through every variety of change and circumstance, and yet, to them, the time for considering the means of improving the condition of Ireland, has never yet arrived; for by them every season has been deemed improper for the redress of its grievances, and of course under their auspices, the beneficial consequences *promised* by the advocates of the union, cannot be looked for. On the part of the Irish I complain, that the minister of that day urged as a motive for hurrying on that measure, that the subject of the grievances of Ireland would be brought where it could be discussed with temper, liberality, and wisdom; but, no sooner was it brought to this side of the water, than it was discovered that it ought not to be brought forward, and for the very same reason, namely, that it would agitate the country and produce the most mischievous consequences.—I beg the house to understand that the condition of that people cannot be ameliorated by one, two, or three measures, but by a great and comprehensive system, the result of a fair, and full view of the whole question; adapted to the wants, and calculated to have a permanent operation on the interests of the country. In giving my support to the bills before the house, I confess my disposition to do so, is considerably damped, by observing that mi-

nisters manifest no inclination to take such steps as can alone prevent the recurrence of that calamity, against which, these bills are intended to guard, namely, by sifting the state of Ireland to the bottom, by deliberating upon it, week after week, and session after session. I cannot help indulging an ardent hope, from what passed on the first day of this session, that this delicate and important question, will soon be taken up by that great character (Mr. Fox) the enlightened champion of the happiness and independence of mankind, the benevolence of whose heart is as extensive as the views and energies of his mind.—I feel deeply impressed by the liberal indulgence I have experienced from the House, on whose patience I have too much trespassed, but when the affairs of Ireland are agitated, I cannot induce myself to remain silent.

General *Loftus*.—I rise, Sir, to give my most perfect support to the measures intended to be brought forward by the right hon. Secretary. They are certainly strong measures, but they are the only ones that will give security to the loyal inhabitants of Ireland. I have listened with great satisfaction to the early part of the speech of the hon. Gent. who has just sat down (Col. Hutchinson), because I know there is one part of Ireland in which the opinion of that hon. Gent. will have considerable weight. As to the question to which the hon. gent. afterwards alluded, I think that a time of war is not the proper period for the discussion of it, or of any question tending to interfere with the constitution. I felt it my duty to say thus much, and I shall sit down with giving my cordial support to the motion.

Mr. *Hawthorn*.—I shall support the motion, Sir, because, from the observations which I had an opportunity of making during the summer, I am convinced that the measures proposed are necessary for the security of the country. It is of considerable consequence to give strength to his Majesty's government in Ireland, to enable them to meet and put down the efforts of treason and rebellion with vigour and effect. His Majesty, in his gracious speech from the throne, has acquainted the house that the principal actors in the late atrocious insurrection have been brought to justice, and that the deluded multitude are returning to a sense of their duty; it is, therefore, essential to give such powers to his government in that country as will enable them to maintain the tranquillity so happily restored. Besides, the manner in which the Irish government have used the extraordinary pow-

ers given in the last session, is the best security that the same powers will not be abused in the present instance. No gentleman, I am sure, will object to the motion of the right hon. Secretary, if he calls to mind the manner in which the rebellion was conducted up to its breaking out, the circumstances of atrocity with which it was then carried on, the manner in which it was put down, and the effect that the first burst of it had on the public mind. The conduct of the Irish government has been characterised by humanity and mildness. Its great object has been to pass over the circumstances of former insurrections, and to extend the benefit of the ordinary course of justice to the guilty, and that, too, at a time when traitors had returned from France, for the purpose of exciting rebellion in the country. I am, therefore, of the opinion, that the proposed measures are necessary for maintaining tranquillity. As to the other topic which has been adverted to on the first day of the session, as well as on the present occasion, I have ever entertained but one, and only one opinion, and that is, that something should be done; but I do not consider this the proper time for entering upon the question.

Lord *Temple* said, that he was not unwilling to give his consent to the motion, trusting in the assertion of the right hon. gent. (Mr. Yorke) that the necessity actually existed for the renewal of an act which in its preamble stated "*the spirit of rebellion and insurrection to be now actually raging in Ireland.*" His hon. friend, (Gen. Loftus) had said, that a time of war and of danger was not the moment for entering into any question affecting the constitution of Ireland. He begged leave to recall to the memory of his hon. friend, and of his Majesty's ministers, (he was sure it was unnecessary to recall it to the memory of his noble friend Lord Castlereagh, opposite to him) that during a period of war and a moment of danger very nearly equal to that which now threatens the country, the House of Commons had passed a measure of no less importance than the *Act of Union*.

Lord *Archibald Hamilton* could not help feeling some surprise, that any doubt could exist as to the propriety of the time for improving the condition of so important a member of the empire. He meant however, to make only a few observations on the subject of the motion. To ascertain the situation of that part of the empire it was scarcely necessary to advert to the situation of its capital, in which every inhabitant was obliged to place a list of all

the inmates of his house on his door. In such circumstances there could scarcely a doubt exist of the propriety of making some efforts to establish the tranquillity of the country upon some solid and permanent grounds. It had been said that this was not the proper time; but the noble Lord would ask, what would be a better time? Were we now going on well, or was the country well? This was a crisis when the exertions of every individual in the empire were necessary for the defence and security of the empire. He contended it was the most proper time to resort to measures that would have the effect of removing every source of complaint, and of uniting every arm in the common cause. His lordship wished to be informed, whether his Majesty's ministers had any specific plan in contemplation for that purpose. There seemed to be but one sentiment in the house with respect to the necessity of uniting heart and hand in the present arduous crisis. He, therefore, again called upon his Majesty's ministers to declare, whether they meant to bring forward any measure but those which had hitherto been pursued in that country. From every thing that had come to his knowledge on that subject, through persons from local information acquainted with it, he thought a different system indispensable, and he thought it the duty of his Majesty's ministers to adopt it. If, however, they should think proper to abandon the interests of that part of the united kingdom, he was of opinion, that in such a case it would be perfectly competent to any individual in the house to bring the question before Parliament.

Mr. *Burrows* desired to be informed whether the notice of the right hon. Secretary, comprehended both the bills intended to be continued?

The *Speaker* informed the hon. member, that the motion before the house related only to that for allowing the suspension of the habeas corpus act, for a time to be limited, and that when that should be disposed of, the motion on the other would be put.

Mr. *Burrows* then rose to state his reason, for putting the question. He was willing to give his ready and perfect concurrence to the first proposition, but on the other question he was disposed to think that some time ought to be allowed before it should be carried into effect. This opinion he entertained not from any concurrence with the observations that had been made this night, or on a former night, tending to shew that the present government of Ireland was

not such as it ought to be, or that affairs were not well nor properly administered in that country; for he was convinced that no system of government was ever better calculated to conciliate the affections of the people, than that now pursued in Ireland. But having said this, he trusted no attempt would be made to bring forward the other law, at least for some time, and particularly as it had not been found necessary in the numerous trials which had already taken place to resort to its provisions, or try any of the culprits by martial law. He hoped, therefore, that the law should not be renewed while Parliament should continue sitting in order that the people might be impressed with the idea that Parliament, at the same time that it entertained a fixed determination to exterminate rebellion, was willing to respect the civil rights of the people. The hon. gent. concluded by giving his support to the motion.

Lord *Castlereagh* rose to offer a few observations in reply to the last speaker. He was happy to find that the hon. gent. had nothing to urge against the character of those who were to be invested with the discretionary power granted by the bill for continuing the use of martial law in Ireland, under such circumstances as might be judged expedient. The hon. gent. had, however, contended that such a bill had never been passed, except where strong proofs of its necessity were produced. For his own part he would venture to assert, and he would defy any gentleman to disprove his observation, that no measure had so materially contributed to prevent the mischief originating from the rebellion from extending itself, as the very measure which was now made the ground of objection. A great body of loyalty had existed in Ireland, during the period that one of the most extensive and most malignant rebellions raged in that country which it was ever the fate of a government to encounter. By the exertions of this assemblage of loyal subjects, that rebellion had been suppressed, and the constitution had been saved from destruction. He must, however, be permitted to say, that it was not till the measure in question had been adopted, that the loyal part of the community were able to feel and to employ their strength. It was not till government was armed with the extraordinary powers with which the measure vested them, that rebellion was attacked in its strong holds and effectually subdued. These were the effects of the measure in putting an end to the rebellion in 1798,

and the continuance of the measure at different periods since that rebellion, had operated consequences no less beneficial. The late mad attempt at rebellion, shewed how much improved the state of the country was, and he had no difficulty in ascribing to the operation of the measure which the hon. member had objected to, that vast augmentation of loyalty which had been obtained during the interval which had taken place betwixt the rebellion of 1798 and the late attempt of a handful of deluded and desperate individuals. The experience of past consequences was the strongest inducement to renew the measure at the present moment. The use that had been made of the measure, was a wise reason for again resorting to it. Though the government was vested with extraordinary powers, there was no reason to be apprehensive that they would be wantonly employed. The circumstance of government being vested with these powers, was the means of enabling them to resort only to the civil tribunals of the country. The civil tribunals, notwithstanding the existence of these powers, had been appealed to, and the result had been equally honourable to the laws and to the individuals to whom the extraordinary powers were delegated. This ought, in his opinion, to operate as an additional inducement to grant extraordinary powers, when it was ascertained that they were not in any instance abused, when discretion was employed, not in suspending, but in encouraging the operation of ordinary tribunals of justice. The great principle which a wise legislature wished to act upon, was a principle of precaution. Its object was to prevent, and not punish crimes after they were perpetrated. It might be argued, that there was at present nothing in the situation of Ireland to justify a measure which went to the suspension of the ordinary privileges of the constitution. The recent attempt at rebellion had not surely escaped the notice of gentlemen, and it could not in fairness be pretended that tranquillity could be so soon restored as to supersede the necessity of a measure, the beneficial effects of which had been so signally experienced. By the timely interference of the legislature, a great deal of detailed misery which had formerly afflicted the loyal part of the community, had been avoided. For every man who was acquainted with the situation of Ireland knew, that such scenes of detailed misery could not have been prevented unless government had been armed with the powers adequate to the nature of the circumstances in which the country was placed. On the

principle that it was wise on the first appearance of the late rebellion to arm government with these powers, he would contend that it was equally wise at the present moment. It would not be denied, that among those deluded individuals who constituted the remains of the rebellion, every effort would be made to interrupt the continuance of tranquillity, more particularly when they were encouraged by the expectation of deriving foreign aid from the enemy holding out threats of immediate invasion. It was, therefore, to these individuals themselves, an act not of severity but of mercy, to continue the operation of the measure in question. It was necessary by vesting government with these extraordinary powers, to convince them that perseverance in their treasonable designs was hopeless, before they could be induced to return to the habits of peaceable allegiance. When they found that they could not take a single step without being watched; when they saw that their pursuits could be blasted in a moment; when they perceived that government possessed the means of instant and signal punishment, it might be reasonably supposed that they would be induced to abandon pursuits evidently leading to inevitable ruin. It was barely an act of justice to make them take up such a view of their conduct and situation. The idea of rebellion ought to be banished from their thoughts by shewing them that it was a project altogether impracticable. On every consideration of experience, of policy, of justice, and of mercy, he was decidedly for re-enacting the bill. He trusted that the hon. gent. would not be inclined to persist in his opposition, or contend that at least the re-enactment of the bill ought to be deferred. Nothing appeared to him so likely to encourage the loyal part of the community, which had such powerful claims to support. Nothing could so effectually discourage the designs or extinguish the hopes of the disaffected see that the government possessed the confidence of the legislature, and that they would receive whatever support the exigencies of affairs required. To refuse to invest government with powers which there was no danger of seeing, in any instance employed with harshness, would elate the spirits of the deluded victims of rebellion, while it would paralyse the exertions and augment the fears of those firm and patriotic friends of the constitution whom it was the duty of Parliament to support by every possible extension of liberal provision. The noble Lord concluded by giving his decided

support to the motion.—Leave was granted to bring in the bill. It was accordingly brought in, read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time on Monday.

[*MARTIAL LAW IN IRELAND.*]—Mr. *Secretary Yorke* next moved, for leave to bring in a bill to continue, for a time to be limited, the bill of last session, for the Suppression of Rebellion in Ireland, by enabling government to establish martial law. On the motion being put from the chair,

Mr. *Burrows* rose to express his reasons for opposing the motion. He begged it to be understood that he did not found his objections to it from any want of confidence in those who were to exercise the powers to be granted by the bill. On the contrary, he had the most entire confidence that these powers would in no instance be abused, either by the government of Ireland or the government of this country. His objection was founded on constitutional grounds. He was convinced that it must be a principle, with every man who loved the constitution, never to give his assent to a bill conferring such extraordinary powers, without the most urgent and imperious necessity. Acting on this principle, he could not, on the ground of confidence in government, consent to violate the constitution, unless the necessity of such violation was clearly established. When this bill was formerly passed, a rebellion actually raged in Ireland, and ample documents to prove its necessity were laid on the table of the house. At present no sort of evidence to prove its necessity was brought forward. Had any parliamentary evidence been adduced? Were any facts stated to shew that the re-enactment of the bill was essential to the maintenance of tranquillity in Ireland? Had the house obtained even the bare responsibility of a minister on the subject? Not one of these grounds of the necessity of the measure had been brought before the house. Independent of all information, Members were called on to give their assent to a measure which confessedly violated the free principles of the British constitution. When any description of subjects were to be deprived of a constitutional privilege, it was necessary to proceed with coolness and deliberation. Even while rebellion raged in Ireland he had not heard of resorting to martial law, and suspending all appeal to the civil tribunals, without a considerable portion of anxiety and alarm. But what he desired the house to consider, were the specific grounds on

which the introduction of martial law was defended. It was on this principle, that jurors were over awed in the discharge of their duty, and that witnesses could not come forward to give their testimony without great personal danger. It was because the ordinary tribunals of justice were necessarily shut up, from the causes which he had now stated, that it became necessary to have recourse to military decisions. If the same circumstances now existed, he should, however reluctant to violate the constitution, give his assent to the motion. No such circumstances did, however, exist, at this period. Jurors could discharge their duty with the utmost safety. Witnesses could come forward to give their testimony without any apprehension of danger. Persons guilty of rebellion had been arraigned before the ordinary tribunals of justice, had been convicted on the clearest evidence, and had suffered the sentence of the law. If the grounds on which martial law was formerly resorted to did not exist, it was not surely asking too much to require some new grounds for re-enacting a bill vesting the executive government with extraordinary and unconstitutional powers. It certainly was not too much to ask, that if new grounds did exist they should be stated. To assent to a bill of this kind without any grounds was what he never could, under any circumstances, do, acting as a representative to parliament. If the hon. sec. of state was determined to persist in pressing the bill, it was at least fair that he should not precipitate its progress through the house. It would be fair to allow those gentlemen who were more particularly connected with Ireland an opportunity of offering their sentiments on the subject. The number of Irish members now in their place was very inconsiderable, and they had a right to be consulted before the constitutional privileges of their constituents were suspended or violated. He had thought it his duty to throw out these few observations to the house. Before he sat down, he begged leave to repeat, he did not oppose the re-enactment of the bill from any want of confidence in the mode in which it would be applied by ministers. He had no doubt that their application of the powers with which it vested them would be mild and merciful. His objections were, however, founded in respect for the constitution, and the character of the government, and should not induce him to vote for a bill, of the necessity for which not the slightest evidence had been adduced.

Mr. *Corry* rose to make a few observa-

tions in reply. The hon. gent. had said, that in all former cases of the passing of the martial law bill, rebellion actually raged, or tranquillity was very seriously disturbed. He begged leave to set the hon. member right on that head. In the year 1801, this very bill had been not only once but twice renewed in the course of the same session, though at that time no rebellion or appearance of rebellion existed from one part of Ireland to another. The hon. gent. seemed to be unacquainted with the history of the rebellion. He did not appear to be aware that the machinations of the disaffected were at their origin carefully veiled in darkness; that their views were gradually disseminated over the country; that it was not till their party was fully organised that they broke out into acts of open rebellion. The wisdom of parliament had been exerted in a number of acts to discover and to disconcert their views. Every effort had been employed to trace out the different relations and bearings of the conspiracy. These efforts had, however, failed of success. Never till the act in question was passed were the designs of rebellion fully ascertained. Never till government was armed with these extraordinary powers was any thing like tranquillity or confidence restored. Though individuals continued to suffer; though acts of insurrection and violence were not altogether destroyed; yet the constitution was saved and the sinews of the rebellion were annihilated. This effect he ascribed, more than to any other cause, to the repeated re-enactments of this bill in the course of the year 1802 and 1803. The hon. gent. however, did not see the necessity of re-enacting the bill at the present period. He had said, that the grounds of its re-enactment formerly was the intimidation of jurors and witnesses in the performance of their duty, but at this moment jurors were unmolested: witnesses could give their testimony without any dread of the consequences; all the ordinary forms of law and of justice were observed. He would not pretend to deny that this description of the state of the country was correct, but he would maintain that the present tranquillity of the country was the effect of the very bill to which the hon. gent. so strongly objected. It was not unknown to the hon. member and the house, that till the bill was passed, the system of intimidation was universally prevalent, and the courts of common law were as a matter of necessity shut, not against rebels alone, but against the loyal part of the community, who were

making every sacrifice in support of the constitution and the existing government. It was not till the rebels found that they could not prosecute their schemes with any hopes of success, that the strong powers vested in the government rendered their detection and punishment a matter of almost absolute certainty, that continuance in rebellion was only another term for destruction, that they thought of abandoning their traitorous projects, that they sat down in laborious tranquillity, and began to return to the habits of dutiful allegiance. If the hon. Member looked to the state of Ireland, merely as it was at this day, his view would be extremely partial and limited. To be able to reason fairly on the subject, it behoved him to look at the progress and various modifications of the rebellion. He ought to compare the means used to spread disaffection with the means employed to check its diffusion among the lower orders. Among these last means, he had the universal testimony of the best informed persons in Ireland, that this measure had been one of the greatest and most efficient causes of the return of tranquillity and order, of the possibility of continuing the ordinary exercise of the form of the common law courts of the land. Independent of this measure, the hon. gent. would not this day have had it in his power to notice the present tranquillity of Ireland as an argument against the re-enactment of the bill. So far from viewing the re-enactment of the bill as any act of severity to the loyal and well-disposed part of the community, he viewed it in the opposite light. By all loyal and well-disposed individuals, it would be considered as a measure not of oppression, but of protection; not of vigour, but of wise precaution, on the part of the government. It would dispel their apprehensions, and give them new energy in their opposition to the designs of the disaffected. It would enable them to check rebellion at its first opening, and leave to them the privilege of appealing for the redress of injuries to the ordinary tribunals of their country. The proclamation of martial law, by the exercise of the prerogative was, what every friend to the constitution would be anxious to avoid. It was to avoid the necessity of such a measure, that the bill was originally introduced, and was now proposed to be continued. Without such a bill, traitors might escape unpunished, and loyal citizens might be deprived of their constitutional privileges, and dragged before military tribunals. On these grounds, the bill had his hearty support, and he hoped it would also obtain the support of the house. It was

a bill which, from his knowledge of the present state of Ireland, he had no difficulty in pronouncing essential to the continuance of tranquillity.

Mr. *John Claudius Beresford* begged the indulgence of the house, while he made a few observations. His hon. friend under the gallery (Mr. Burrows) had urged two objections to the re-enactment of the bill, at least, without more mature consideration. The first objection was, that no facts were produced to justify the necessity of the measure. The second objection was drawn from the thinness of the members particularly connected with Ireland, and best fitted to give information to the house on the subject. With regard to the first objection, it was unnecessary for him to take up the time or attention of the House. His right hon. friend had fully removed this objection, and he heartily agreed with his right hon. friend, that if the measure were not renewed, the same system of terror, which had been alluded to, would immediately be renewed in all its horrors. With regard to the thinness of the attendance of members connected with Ireland, he should make one or two remarks. Having been very recently in Ireland, and having had occasion to ascertain what were the sentiments of at least three-fourths of the Irish members resident in that country, as to the expediency and necessity of the measure, he requested the house, on his veracity, to be assured, that they were to a man convinced, that the re-enactment of the bill was indispensably necessary to the preservation of tranquillity; and to the protection of all loyal subjects. They were so thoroughly convinced of its necessity, that they expected the re-enactment of the bill would be one of the earliest acts of the session. If they had not indulged such an expectation, they would, at this moment, have been in their places to solicit its re-enactment. This sentiment, of the necessity of the measure, he might add, was not confined to members, but was entertained by every loyal man in every part of the country. He, himself, had been the only Irish member, who had expressed doubts respecting the loyalty of the lower orders, in opposition to the opinion of a number of other most respectable individuals. He rejoiced to find, that the opinion he entertained of the disloyalty of the lower orders was erroneous, and that the spirit of disaffection was much less general than he had dreaded. At this moment all good men of every part were animated with feelings of loyalty, and convinced of the necessity of defending the country against the common enemy. Every man who possessed only 20l.

a year, was now disposed to unite against all foreign and domestic foes. The late insurrection had not a twentieth part of the extent of the rebellion of 1798; and all classes of the people, with an exception of a few of the lower orders, were universally disposed to assist government against an invading enemy.—He was also authorized to state, that it was the wish of all sects in that kingdom, that no question should be brought forward, which might have the effect of agitating the public mind, at a period, when it was so essential, that all descriptions should unite in the defence of their common interests.—Leave was obtained to bring in the bill; which was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time on Monday.

[*IRISH BANK RESTRICTION BILL.*—Mr. *Corry*, pursuant to notice, moved for leave to bring in a bill to continue, for a time to be limited, the restriction on the issues of cash by the Bank of Ireland. It was unnecessary for him to urge any reasons to induce the house to agree to his motion. The same motives that induced the house to entertain the bill with respect to the Bank of England applied to the present case, and as the measure he proposed, was always consequential to that which had been introduced within a few days by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he should content himself barely with moving, that leave be given. Leave was given.—Mr. *Corry* then moved, that there be laid before the House, an account of the amount of bank of Ireland notes, including bank post bills, payable at seven days sight, in circulation on the first days of January, April, June, and September, 1800; also, amount in circulation on the first days of April, May, and June, 1801; also, amount in circulation on the first days of June, August, October, and November, 1802, and first of February, 1803; also, amount in circulation on the first days of January, April, August, and September, 1803; distinguishing, in this last instance, the value of those below the value of five guineas. Ordered.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Saturday, December 3.

[*MINUTES.*] Mr. *Hobhouse* brought up the report of the committee upon expiring laws. The resolutions were read and agreed to, and bills were ordered to be brought in pursuant to them.—Mr. *Secretary Yorke* presented a copy of a proclamation issued by the lord lieutenant of Ireland, to prevent distillation from oats and oatmeal in that country. Ordered to be laid on the table.—Mr. *Corry*

gave notice, that on Monday he should move for leave to bring in a bill to indemnify the lord-lieutenant of Ireland for issuing this proclamation; and also, that he should move for the introduction of a clause into that bill, to enable the lord-lieutenant to impose such a prohibition, during a time to be limited. Mr. Hobhouse brought up the report of the committee for considering the propriety of affording a temporary relief to the Curates displaced by the operation of the bill for enforcing the residence of the clergy. The resolution for granting 8,000*l.* for this purpose was agreed to.—Sir Francis Burdett presented a petition on behalf of the churchwardens and overseers of the poor of the parish of St. Pancras, in the county of Middlesex, setting forth that the duties of their officers had increased so much that they wanted assistants to be appointed in order to enable them to do justice to their situations, &c., Referred to a select committee.—The Chancellor of the Exchequer gave notice, that on Monday he should move, that a committee be appointed to investigate the joint account between Great Britain and Ireland, as in the last session.—Mr. Hobhouse brought up the report of the committee of supply on certain parts of the naval service voted yesterday. The resolutions were read and agreed to.—Mr. Corry brought in the bill for continuing the restriction on payments in specie by the bank of Ireland. Read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time on Monday.—The bill for continuing the restriction on cash payments by the bank of England, went through a committee. On the motion of Mr. the words, the blank was filled up with Vansittart, "six months after the ratification of a definitive treaty of peace." The report was ordered to be received on Monday.—The House went into a committee to consider of the propriety of renewing, for a further time, the liberty granted for bonding Portugal wines, which had expired on the 10th of October, Mr. Vansittart, in stating the propriety of extending this indulgence, stated also, that it was thought advisable to give the benefit of it to Spanish wines. A resolution to this effect was agreed to, and being reported, the committee appointed to bring in the bill for the continuation of expiring laws was ordered to make provision accordingly.—Mr. Vansittart brought in the annual bill for indemnifying magistrates and others who had neglected to take the necessary oaths. The bill was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time on Monday.—Mr. Corry gave notice, that he would move in the proper stage to introduce

a clause into this bill for extending the benefit of the indemnity to Ireland.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, December 5.

Their Lordships met at a little after three, when the appeal from the court of session of Scotland in which Christie and Keay were appellants, and Proudfoot, Dean of Guild and the Guild Council of the Burgh of Perth, respondent, came before them. Messrs. Adams and Grant were heard on the part of the appellants, and Mr. Romilly for the respondent. The farther hearing of council was deferred until to-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, December 5.

[MINUTES.] The bill for inclosing lands in the manor and parish of Fulbeck, in the county of Lincoln, for making compensation for the tithes arising within the same parish, was read a second time, and committed.—Mr. Manning brought in a bill to enable the London dock company to raise a further sum of 500,000*l.* for the construction of wet docks and other works, for the greater accommodation of the London merchants. Read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time.—Mr. Grant acquainted the House, that Col. F. W. Grant, who had been ordered to attend in his place on Wednesday next, had arrived in town, and would attend in his place to-morrow.—Mr. Secretary Yorke presented at the bar, by his Majesty's command, a copy of the convention between his Britannick Majesty and the King of Sweden, signed on the 25th of July 1803. Ordered to lie on the table.—Mr. Secretary Yorke moved the second reading of the bill for continuing the suspension of the habeas corpus act in Ireland. The bill was accordingly read a second time without giving rise to any debate, and ordered to be committed to-morrow. Mr. Poole presented the ordnance estimates for 1804, which were ordered to lie on the table, and the hon. member gave notice, that he would, on Friday next, in the committee of supply, move the consideration of these estimates after the army estimates were disposed of.—The Chancellor of the Exchequer moved, that a committee be appointed to enquire into the expenditure of the United Kingdom, from the first day of January 1801, and the sums contributed thereto by Great Britain and Ireland respectively, and report the same with their opinion thereupon, to the House. And a committee was appointed accordingly.

—In a committee of supply the committee on the motion of Sir Philip Stephens, voted the following sums for the transport service, for the year 1804, 709,000*l.*; for prisoners of war at home and abroad, 220,000*l.*; for sick prisoners of war, 40,000*l.*; the House being resumed, the report was presented.—Mr. Corry rose to move, for leave to bring in a bill to suspend the act of last session prohibiting the negotiation of small notes in Ireland. He wished it to be understood, that government did not, by this means, propose any general system or permanent regulation on the subject. They only proposed this as a temporary measure till the Irish members hitherto detained at home, by their attention to the defence of their own shores, could be present, and the question could be fully considered. Leave was given and the bill brought in and read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time to-morrow. The House having gone into a committee on expiring laws, a report was agreed to and reported, on which Mr. Corry brought in a bill to suspend certain acts prohibiting the exportation from Ireland, of corn, potatoes, and provisions, and to permit their importation for a time, to be limited. The bill was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.—The seamen's desertion bill was read a third time and passed.—The malt duty bill was read a first time, and ordered for a second reading to-morrow.—A bill for continuing and regulating the bounty on sugar exported from Ireland was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.—The pension, &c., duty bill was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.—The Curate's relief bill was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.—The bill to suspend the act prohibiting the negotiation, &c., of small notes in Ireland, was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.—A bill for continuing an act discontinuing certain bounties on the exportation of sugar, was read a first time, and ordered for a second reading to-morrow.—The five millions exchequer bills was read a first time. The Test indemnity bill was read a first time.

[OATS DISTILLATION BILL.] Mr. Corry pursuant to his notice on Saturday, rose to move for leave to bring in a bill to indemnify the lord lieutenant, and such as had acted under the authority of his proclamation, issued in October, prohibiting the distillation of spirits from oats, which had been laid before the house by his right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It would be necessary for him to state the cause and

circumstances of the proclamation, before he should submit his motion to the house. The prohibition had arisen from a supposed failure of the crop of potatoes, in consequence of the extreme drought of the season. Potatoes constituted the chief support of the mass of the people of that country, and the failure of a crop had the same effect there as the failure of a crop of wheat would have in this country, or of a crop of oats in the northern part of it. The active vigilance of the Irish government, had ascertained, that there was a deficiency in the crop of potatoes, in three out of the four provinces of Ireland, and, therefore, it became the wisdom of his excellency to provide for the supply of this deficiency, by prohibiting the use of oats in distillation. This he had done by a proclamation issued in October, in which he had exceeded the powers which the law allowed him: and the object of the bill he should move for was, to indemnify him for having done so. He trusted the house would consider the conduct of the Irish government, on this occasion, rather as deserving approbation than censure, for the laudable attention it had manifested in providing for the support of the people. He trusted the house would not object to the measure, and he proposed if the house should accede to his motion, to introduce into the bill a clause to enable the lord lieutenant, or other chief governor of Ireland to prohibit, for a certain time, by proclamation, the distillation of spirits from oats. He was aware of the effect such a measure might have on the landed interest, and the revenue, but he trusted there would be no difficulty or objection to trusting such a discretionary power to the lord lieutenant, who would have every inducement to forbear from the exercise of it. He should not trespass further on the house, but move, that leave be given to bring in the bill, &c., and the question being put, and the proclamation entered as read.

Mr. Francis did not mean to oppose the motion, though an enemy to every exercise of power contrary to law; he was inclined to approve of it in the present instance, where it had been evidently directed to secure the country from famine. The lord lieutenant he thought, had acted right, and of the descriptions of power, the one proposed to be committed to him by the present measure, was least likely to be abused. He should not be sorry if greater powers were given or if the distillation of oats were altogether prohibited, for he was confident, that much serious mischief was caused by the use of that pernicious liquor, whiskey, so made.

Mr. Corry took the opportunity of the hon.

gentleman's observations, to throw out a remark, for the purpose of quieting any apprehensions that might be entertained by another body of men, the distillers, whose interests concurred with the interests of the revenue. For that purpose, therefore, he threw out, by way of notice, that regard would be had to their interests, by a regulation of revenue.

[INDIA BONDS.]—Lord Castlereagh moved the order of the day, for the second reading of the bill for regulating the interest on India bonds; on the question being put,

Mr. Gregor said, he did not mean to oppose the measure; on the contrary, he was obliged to the noble lord for bringing in any bill to amend or rectify the defects of the property-tax act. It had been stated from authority, that no alteration was to be made in that act during the present session; but for his own part, he was of opinion, that it was a perfectly impracticable act. By that, he meant, that it could not be executed according to its letter; but, if executed at all, must be executed according to the arbitrary, or discretionary interpretation of the commissioners. He had received letters on the subject from two gentlemen of good sense and intelligence, who had been appointed commissioners; they were of opinion, that the act, in its present form, could not be executed. He did not mean to enter into the detail of all its clauses, and should only advert to one clause, which directed that the commissioners of the land-tax should be the commissioners for executing this act. The hon. Member contended, that in place of a board of collection, a board of controul was thus established. He threw out this observation merely to call the attention of gentlemen to the defects of this act.

Mr. Vansittart observed, that only one of the hon. gentleman's observations applied to the question before the house. The hon. gent. had confessed himself much obliged to the noble lord, for bringing in a bill to explain any part of the property-tax bill. His noble friend's measure, however, went only to amend the mode of collection in one instance, and not to alter any of the provisions of the act. With regard to the other observations of the hon. gent., he felt it would be to travel out of the question, to advert to them. It would be found, that the act, to which the hon. gent. had alluded, though perhaps containing some difficulty or obscurity, was, on the whole, more perspicuous than gentlemen were disposed to admit.

[IRISH MARTIAL LAW BILL.]—Mr. Secretary Yorke moved the order of the day,

for the second reading of the Irish martial law bill. On the question being put, that the bill be read a second time,

Mr. William Elliot rose, and spoke as follows:—Sir; the observations, which I am about to offer, will be comprised within a very narrow compass. Indeed, I should not have intruded myself at all upon the patience of the house, if I could, compatibly with the view I entertain of my duty towards the country, to which this bill immediately relates, have permitted a measure of such moment to pass in a silence, that might have the appearance of a listless indifference. The affairs of Ireland must be universally admitted to merit the serious attention and earnest solicitude of every member of Parliament; but there are several among us, who are under more peculiar and indispensable obligations to watch over its concerns. I mean, Sir, those who gave their votes for the legislative union of the two countries. It does especially behove such of us as were instrumental in the extinction of the local parliament of Ireland, to shew to the people of that country; so far at least as may depend upon our individual exertions, that we have substituted in its place a legislature adequate, not only in means, but in zeal, diligence, and constancy, for the discharge of the trust confided to it. The local Parliament, Sir, had indisputably one eminent advantage. Being, from the very circumstance of its locality, more intimately mixed with the transactions of the country, it had a shorter and more easy access to information in respect to its internal state than a more remote legislature can possess. This inconvenience attached to the united Parliament, the friends of the union believed, would be far overbalanced by the numerous and solid benefits likely to accrue from that measure; but no one can contend, that it is not an additional call on this Parliament, for its most active vigilance and assiduous application with regard to the interests of Ireland. The inquisitorial power of Parliament, Sir, is the very vital principle of all its privileges and functions, and I trust this authority will ever be exercised fairly, faithfully, and impartially, throughout every part of the united kingdom. Before we frame laws for Ireland, it is incumbent on us to have before us, an accurate state of the country for which we are about to legislate. Under these impressions, Sir, I come to the matter before us, which every one must feel to be of the most grave and critical importance. It is a demand upon us, for continuing to the executive government of Ireland, the power of depriving, at its discretion, a very large de-

scription of our fellow subjects of those rights of liberties, to which, by the ordinary principles of the constitution, they are entitled. The measure, Sir, has certainly been often adopted. That it has been too frequently necessary, and that in many instances even the preservation of the country has been attributable to it, is a position I shall be the last man in this house to deny, and should be at variance with all my past conduct, if I were disposed to dispute it. But I should feel myself acting in direct contradiction to the motives, which have on former occasions impelled me to vote for the measure, if I were not to expect such parliamentary information as might enable every gentleman to form a clear and satisfactory judgment in respect to its present necessity. I was a member, Sir, in the Irish parliament, at the period in which the first martial law bill was introduced, and if I am inaccurate in my recollection of the grounds upon which it was originally founded, I am in the presence of several gentlemen, who are well able to correct me. On the commencement of the rebellion in the year 1798, the lord-lieutenant, with the advice of the privy council, issued orders (notified by proclamation) to the officers commanding his Majesty's forces to employ the troops under their command with the utmost vigour and decision for the suppression of the rebellion; the rebellion, however, extending itself, insomuch that several very daring attacks and outrages were committed both on the troops and on the persons and properties of many loyal persons, the lord-lieutenant, by the advice of the privy council, directed all the general officers commanding his Majesty's forces, to punish all rebellious offenders according to martial law. This order was likewise notified by a proclamation, which, together with the former order and proclamation, was communicated to parliament; and the houses of lords and commons by their addresses, expressed their entire approbation of those measures, with assurances to his excellency of their cordial support. Nevertheless the rebellion continued so late as the year 1799 in several parts of the country, and the ordinary course of justice and of the common law was in many places interrupted, in consequence of which the martial law bill was enacted. All these particulars, Sir, are set forth in the preamble to that act, which will be found among the Irish statutes now before you; and I cannot omit to remark, that when the bill was introduced, there were on the

table of the Irish house of commons two reports of two secret committees, which contained a very minute and detailed history both of the system and extent of the treason connected with the rebellion, and the last of the reports had been presented so late as the end of the preceding session. In the year 1800 the law was revived, but in fact it was to be considered as a continuance of the former act passed upon the grounds I have stated; and it is to be observed too, that at the opening of the session the lord-lieutenant had stated in his speech from the throne, that, though public tranquillity had been in a great measure restored, there still continued in several districts a disposition to outrage and conspiracy. In the year 1801 the act of the former year was, about the period of the King's recovery, continued for a very short time, by the united parliament, without an enquiry; and it was in the course of the same session renewed a second time; but upon what proceeding did the house then adopt the measure? On a report from a secret committee actually recommending it. — And you, Sir, then chief secretary to the lord-lieutenant of Ireland, brought in the bill upon that specific ground. Now, Sir, let me ask, whether the house possesses such information in the present instance, as that to which both the Irish and the united parliament were thought entitled, when on former occasions they have passed this measure? From the introduction of the law, which this bill is intended to continue, to this moment we only know that there was a rebellious insurrection in Dublin, on the 23rd of July last, in which Lord Kilwarden and his nephew were murdered. The extent of the conspiracy, whether there were any correspondent movements in the North or South of Ireland, whether any papers were found developing the object of the treason, are points of which parliament has been kept in a state of the most profound and humiliating ignorance. When the message communicating the insurrection was delivered I was absent from town, but I have on a former occasion declared, that, if I had been in the house, I should have given my vote for the existing law, partly on a temporary and coerced confidence in the assertions of his Majesty's ministers, that prompt and vigorous measures were absolutely necessary, and partly on the intelligence contained in private letters, which several of my acquaintance in London had received. But, Sir, I protest I

should have voted for it under a clear conviction that his Majesty's ministers would, as soon as they could have arranged and digested it, laid before Parliament a farther detailed communication, not only in respect to the conspiracy, but to the general state of the country, and on this ground gave my most cordial and zealous support to a motion, which was made at the close of the last session for procuring such information. The Parliament however was prorogued without one ray of light on the situation of Ireland, and in this state of darkness we are now called upon to continue these extraordinary powers to the Irish government. Sir, I do for one declare with the most genuine sincerity, that in the present dearth of our information, I do not feel able to form a decisive judgment upon this question, for it is impossible even to estimate the real magnitude of the late conspiracy, which seems always to expand or contract in conformity to the views of those who describe it. I am therefore not prepared to negative the bill, but I must express my hope that the progress of it will be suspended until some parliamentary ground is laid for its necessity. Ireland may be in such a state as to render the measure absolutely requisite, but surely, Sir, it is not too much to ask for some document, some evidence, some information on the subject. It may be said that this bill is only the continuance of an existing law, and that in one or two instances the martial law bill has been renewed without any previous specific communication from government; but, Sir, the present proposition is for the continuance of an act, which passed, as it were, by acclamation, in the exigency of the moment, and which itself, as I contend, stands, in a constitutional view, upon a defective title. It will probably be alleged too that we ought to vote this measure upon confidence in his Majesty's ministers, who will be responsible for the execution of it. Now, Sir, I aver it is a case, in which there is no pretence for confidence. On a subject of such magnitude and importance I cannot consent to act on the principle of implicit faith in any government. Much information may clearly be given to us, which can be divulged without a possibility of detriment to the state, and that class of intelligence, which may require more caution and reserve in the communication of it, may be afforded to us through the medium of a secret committee. No injury can result from the delay as the existing law will not expire for some weeks. But, perhaps, his

Majesty's ministers may tell me that they cannot argue with me on the point of confidence, as I profess a general want of confidence in them; and concur with those who think them incompetent to the trust they have assumed. But such, Sir, is the whimsical dilemma in which ministers have placed themselves, that I defy any man, who gives implicit faith to the scanty information they have furnished to us, to vote for this measure. I relied upon the little intelligence they have afforded us, I must, on the plain principles of common sense and justice, meet this bill with my unqualified negative. The only *parliamentary* information before the house in respect to the state of Ireland is contained in the King's speech, for the trials, to which we have been referred, do not come within the description of parliamentary documents. Now, Sir, in the King's speech the conspiracy is alluded to as a past event. We are told "that the public tranquillity has experienced no further interruption, and that a hope is indulged, that such of his Majesty's deluded subjects as have swerved from their allegiance are now convinced of their error; and that having compared the advantages they derive from the protection of a free constitution, with the condition of those countries which are under the domination of the French government, they will cordially and zealously concur in resisting any attempt that may be made against the security and independence of the united kingdom." We have generally, Sir, been accustomed to hear the advantages of the British constitution described as positive benefits, and I cannot help remarking, that this is the first instance within my recollection, in which they have been in a *state paper* exemplified by a mere comparison with the miseries of surrounding nations. But to proceed, Sir, the only other source of information is the report of the proceedings of the special commission in Dublin for the trial of the conspirators. This, however, I must again deny to be a parliamentary document; but I have recourse to it, partly for want of other intelligence, and partly because I understand his Majesty's ministers have in a former discussion on this subject recommended us to resort to it. In making this reference, I naturally look to the opinion of the first law-officer of the crown, who must be supposed to have the best means of information, and I shall therefore take the liberty of reading to the house two or three passages from different parts of the speech

of the attorney-general to the jury, on the first trial that took place under the special commission, from which gentlemen will be able to collect his sentiments, both with respect to the general state of the country, and to the magnitude of the late conspiracy.—Speaking of the disastrous transactions of the 23rd of July, he says: “Certainly it is matter of some consolation to *know*, that the conspiracy which broke out into open insurrection on the 23rd of July last, *was confined within much narrower limits than the promoters of it are willing to inculcate*. Whether we consider the *numbers* who have embarked in the enterprise, *their wealth or their character*, it will appear *con- temptible in the extreme*. So far as it had for its odious object the subversion of the government and constitution of this country, it was *absurd and romantick*, it was *idle, and visionary even in the opinion of many of those who embraced it*.”—Again, notwithstanding the horrors of that night (23d July) which no man can regret more than I do, yet I think they furnish some ground for reflection, that the *people, who had been worked into arms from one end of the country to the other in 1798, could not be roused beyond the assemblage of a DESPERATE MOB, as contemptible in number as it was atrocious in disposition*. After avowing their object to be to overset the government of the country, and to break the connexion with England, they state that 19 counties will come forward with promptitude to effect it. *But five weeks have since elapsed, and not one single county have come forward at their call*. THE CONSPIRACY SEEMS ALMOST ENDED WHERE IT BEGAN.” And in another passage the learned gentleman observes, “though from the abandoned profligacy of those who were employed in the execution of it (the conspiracy), we have to lament many private calamities and disgusting horrors; yet perhaps they should be considered as the visitations of Providence to confound the devices of our enemies, and to rouse the loyal energies of the nation.” This last remark, however, does not, I confess, appear to be quite consistent with the learned gentleman’s general impression of the improved disposition of the country, for we cannot entertain a very favourable idea of the meliorated temper of a people, who require the massacre of a chief magistrate and the loss of several lives, in order to rouse their *loyal energies*. But, Sir, I believe I shall be allowed accurately to sum up the information we have received, by stating the amount to be, that the late con-

spiracy was contemptible both in numbers and character, and seems almost to have ended where it began, that there has been no further interruption of the public tranquillity, and that the hope is indulged that the deluded are now convinced of their error, and that they will cordially and zealously concur in the defence of the kingdom against the common enemy. And what is the inference, which his Majesty’s ministers require us to draw from this statement? The continuance of the martial law bill!! Now, Sir, I ask whether such a conclusion from such premises would be reconcileable to any principle of common reason and equity? I have not had an opportunity of looking into the preamble of this bill, but I should imagine that the drawing of it must have exposed the reasoning faculties of the crown lawyers (and no one can rate their talents higher than I do) to great embarrassment. If it fully describes the parliamentary ground of the measure it must, I apprehend, run thus. “Whereas the late contemptible and insignificant conspiracy in the city of Dublin, was so speedily and effectually suppressed, that it seems almost to have ended where it began, and whereas the public tranquillity has experienced no further interruption, and there is reason to indulge the hope, that the deluded are convinced of their error, and that they will cordially and zealously concur in resisting any attempt that may be made against the security and independence of the united kingdom; be it enacted, that the lord-lieutenant of Ireland be invested with the power of declaring martial law, &c. &c.” Now, Sir, this, I apprehend, will not be thought sound logic, and yet such must be the language of this bill, if it is framed on the only information his Majesty’s ministers have afforded to parliament, and thus, I trust I have proved myself justified in asserting, that those who reposed with implicit confidence on the representation of the King’s servants, must, as it appears to me, on every principle of consistency and justice, give this measure their most decided opposition. But I, Sir, profess myself to have no such confidence. I have long since remarked with deep regret, that his Majesty’s ministers are apt to take very false and erroneous views of the situation of the affairs intrusted to their direction. We all remember the expectation, which they seemed to indulge themselves, and which they certainly permitted the public to indulge, until almost the very day, on which the chancellor of the exchequer announced the menacing preparations of the enemy. But Ireland, Sir, itself furnishes a most illustrious instance of this sort

of self-delusion on the part of his Majesty's ministers. The flattering descriptions of the state of that country, which were given at various times by several gentlemen, in the course of the last session, cannot have been forgot by any member of this house. The speech of the right hon. gent. opposite to me (the Chancellor of the Exchequer), on one of these occasions, in answer to my right hon. Friend near me (Mr. Windham) will not easily be effaced from my memory. He told us that there were in this war, none of the odious restrictions on the liberties of the people, which it had been necessary to impose in the last. No suspension of the habeas corpus act. No martial law bill. Loyalty, harmony, and zeal for the public service, prevailed universally throughout the united kingdom, and all these benefits he described as the result of the peace of Amiens: and yet within a week afterwards, I assert positively, within a week afterwards, the same hon. gent. came to this house, announcing an insurrection in Dublin, and bringing in his hand two bills, one for the suspension of the habeas corpus act, and the other for the declaration of martial law. And here, Sir, I trust, will terminate their vaunting encomiums on the peace of Amiens; for I protest, from past experience, I never heard such exulting and ostentatious statements from the treasury bench, without a sort of superstitious apprehension of some approaching calamity. But, Sir, I must maintain that the mysterious circumstances of this very transaction of the 23rd of July, which is the basis of the present measure, furnishes an additional reason why the house should not proceed without further information. It now appears, that, while his Majesty's ministers were accumulating eulogies on the treaty of Amiens, the rebels in Dublin were collecting military stores; and that a large magazine was actually formed, without, as I have good foundation for believing, even a suspicion of it on the part of the Irish government. The government of Ireland, however, was not without pretty urgent intimations of some treasonable confederacy. The explosion of a secret gunpowder-mill, the detection of the conveyance of prepared ammunition in the streets of Dublin, and the intelligence, given by several most respectable individuals, of sure indications of approaching commotion, were formidable warnings; nevertheless the government seems to have been surprised. But when this suggestion was made by my right hon. friend near me (Mr. Windham), his Ma-

jesty's ministers denied the imputation with indignation. "Why," said my hon. friend, "it was not unnatural for me to suppose it a surprise; because, a few days only have intervened, since you gave this house the most captivating description of the internal tranquillity and loyalty of Ireland." Still the answer from his Majesty's ministers was, "that the government in Ireland had been prepared." "What precautions did you take, except strengthening two or three guards in the vicinity of Dublin," asked my hon. friend. "Did you make any previous communication to the privy council? No. To the lord mayor? No; the Mansion-house was robbed of a considerable quantity of arms. To the chief justice? No; he fell a victim to his ignorance of the information government possessed." Nevertheless his Majesty's ministers persevere in asserting, that proper provision was made against the impending danger, and that the conduct of the Irish government was full of energy and alertness. The fact may have been so, Sir, but I honestly acknowledge I have my doubts of it; and I do in my conscience believe that a majority of this house, and of the public, doubt it. Sir, I criminate no man, for I know not, supposing there is ground for censure, to whom the blame attaches. There is no one who entertains more personal respect and esteem for the individual at the head of the administration of Ireland than I do, and for several members of the different departments of that government I have the most cordial friendship; but the very interest that I take in their fame, increases my anxiety for an investigation of the mystery, in which this whole transaction is enveloped. Sir, I beseech gentlemen for a moment to make this case their own; suppose, that while his Majesty's ministers were exhausting their eloquence in expatiating on the internal harmony and loyalty attributed to a peace which lasted but a twelvemonth, and in the course of which the enemy was detected in devices for sending military spies into the country, a traitorous plot should have suddenly burst on this metropolis, and that, in the exigency of the occasion, the parliament had vested in the crown, the same powers it has given to the lord lieutenant of Ireland; suppose it should have afterwards appeared, that, though a secret powder mill, and a quantity of prepared ammunition, have been previously detected, and the government warned of the danger, by several most respectable persons, yet that no communication should have been

made to the privy council, to any of the great officers of state, or to the Lord Mayor, and that the chief justice of the King's Bench should have been murdered, and the mansion house robbed of arms. Imagine, too, that the session should have been permitted to close without any detailed information to Parliament; that during the recess the attorney-general should declare on the trials of the persons concerned in the treason, that the conspiracy was contemptible both in respect to numbers and character, and that it had terminated almost where it began; and that the ensuing session should have been opened by a speech from the throne, acquainting Parliament, that the public tranquillity had experienced no further interruption, and that his Majesty indulged the hope that the deluded were convinced of their error and were returned to their allegiance; let it be imagined, I say, that, under such circumstances, a minister without the production of a single document, should demand from Parliament a renewal of a martial law bill, I solemnly put it to the honour of every member who hears me, whether he believes this house would adopt such a measure without even asking a question. Sir, it is my firm and honest conviction, that no minister would presume even to make such a proposition. If then we should not pass this bill in our own case without due proof of its necessity, what can be the sentiment of Ireland, if, in the instance of that part of the united kingdom, we should adopt it with the facility, which his Majesty's ministers seem to recommend to us. Here, Sir, is a source to me of very painful and anxious apprehensions. If we do treat the business of Ireland lightly and superficially; if we do appear to act negligently towards her interests, we shall at the same time act offensively to her feelings. The people of that country may begin to draw very unpleasant contrasts, they may say "in our local Parliament our affairs would have experienced a more grave and serious attention, our antient legislature would not have suspended our rights and privileges without adequate evidence of the urgency of the measure;" and thus, Sir, do I dread that the substantial benefits of the union may be frustrated, and that if his Majesty's servants persevere in their present deportment towards the affairs of Ireland, I may live to repent the vote I gave for the accomplishment of that great object. I perceive, by the gestures of the gentlemen opposite to me, that they mean to accuse me of a course of argument injurious to the public welfare, but they will do well to recollect, that

the mischief will be in their conduct; and not in my statement, and I have felt it my peculiar duty to seize this opportunity of expressing my sense of the danger of their system, because we are still in time to anticipate it. For the reasons I have assigned, Sir, I shall not negative the bill; but I do most earnestly exhort and conjure his Majesty's ministers, for the dignity and character of our proceedings, for the sake of constitutional precedent, and in justice, as well as policy towards Ireland, to defer its further stages, until sufficient parliamentary information, in respect to the situation of that part of the united kingdom, shall be furnished to the house.

Mr. *Secretary Yorke* considered the greater part of the speech of the right hon. gent. to be directed more against the general conduct of the Irish government, than against the bill now before the house. The hon. member had thought proper to assert, that the affairs of Ireland did not occupy so great a share of the attention of government, or of the house, as their vast importance required. This was a very strong charge, but of the facts on which it was to be supported he professed himself to be totally ignorant. When the hon. member thought proper to give notice of a motion respecting the affairs of Ireland, and that motion came regularly before the house, he should be ready to meet any charges which were brought forward. Till this was done, he must content himself with giving the assertion a general denial. A charge of so important a kind would require strong evidence to support it, and he did not see the propriety of bringing it forward in a loose, unsupported manner. The hon. member had said, that it was particularly the duty of those who had voted for the union, to pay the utmost attention to the affairs of Ireland. For himself, he thought it equally the duty of all members to pay every possible degree of attention to this subject whenever it came to be fairly discussed, and he had no doubt that it would at all times receive the gravest and most mature consideration, such as its high importance was entitled to. A great deal had been said in the hon. gentleman's speech about additional information. He wished to know of what description the information was which was required. The information before the house was, that the rebellion in Ireland had been suppressed, that measures of precaution were, however, indispensably necessary, more especially when it was considered that the enemy had avowed his de-

termination to avail himself of the insurrection of the disaffected to aid his designs of invasion both against this country and Ireland. These appeared to him simple, clear, and satisfactory grounds for the renewal of the bill, as the best measure of precaution which could be adopted. The hon. member, in reference to the late rebellion which broke out in the capital of Ireland, had thought proper to assert that the government was surprized, and that sufficient measures had not been adopted to prevent this desperate attempt of a few enthusiastic individuals. He must now, and on every occasion where such an assertion was made, distinctly deny that the government of Ireland was in any degree surprized. It was equally remote from the truth, that proper measures of precaution had not been adopted. The measures of precaution consisted in a numerous and well appointed garrison. When he stated to the house, that there were on the night of the insurrection in Dublin four veteran regiments, besides the 16th reg. of light dragoons, one of the best appointed regiments in the service, making a total of betwixt 3 and 4,000 men, it could not be pretended with the smallest justice that the government had been wanting in measures of precaution for the defence of the capital. He would venture to affirm, and he would defy any gentleman to disprove his observation, that the force in Dublin on the 23d day of July, in the evening of which the insurrection had broken out, was adequate to the suppression, not only of the miserable mob of infatuated individuals then engaged, but of a number more than ten times their amount. With equal confidence he would assert, that the safety of Dublin was never, even for one moment, in danger. The best proof of this was, that after the military were brought to act, an hour had not elapsed before the rebels had dispersed and tranquillity was restored. It could not be seriously pretended, that the wretched mob of the 23d of July could ever have put the capital of Ireland in a state of the smallest danger. Their number according to the confession of their own leaders, did not exceed 80, and their progress commencing in Dirty Lane, had been terminated in Cutpurse Row. They had not dared to approach any of the principal parts of the town, and as to the idea of their ever marching to the attack of the Castle, it really was altogether ridiculous. This appeared by the conduct of their principal leader. When he found the contemptible state of his followers, either in point of numbers or of discipline, he had taken his

road down a street leading to the country, where he threw off his rebel uniform, regardless of the fate of his deluded partners in rebellion. Much stress was laid by those who blamed the conduct of ministers, on the circumstance that they were not aware of the existence of the rebel magazine in the heart of Dublin. True it was, that this circumstance had not been discovered previous to the insurrection of the 23d of July. Ministers, however, were apprised, that a rising was intended on that day, and such precautions were adopted, as left Dublin fully protected from all danger. True it was, that a respected magistrate had fallen a sacrifice to the fury of the rebels; but this atrocity was, in no degree whatever, imputable to the negligence of ministers. From certain circumstances, that nobleman had heard of an intended insurrection in Dublin, and he was in consequence induced to proceed to town at a late hour. Perhaps it would have been more prudent if he had not thought of entering Dublin that night, or at least that he had not entered it at that particular part of the town, where individuals ready for acts of atrocities could always be without difficulty collected. Much as the atrocity was to be lamented, it was in no degree brought on by the misconduct of the Irish government. But, to return more directly to the question before the house, though the hon. member appeared to consider it but of secondary importance. It was argued, that it was contrary to practice, to pass such a bill without previous information. He begged leave to recal the honourable member's recollection to the case of 1801, when it was passed without any detailed information being communicated. He wished to ask the hon. member, if he felt himself authorised, without further information, to give his negative to the bill? He wished to ask, if he would insist on delay, even at the risk of leaving the government destitute of powers adequate to meet any emergency which might occur? As to the general charge against ministers for withholding information; this was a question quite different from the motion for the renewal of the bill.—If the hon. gent. had any distinct charge to make against the government of Ireland; if he could produce any facts to prove that they had been deficient in foresight and energy, he should at all times be ready to meet and to repel that charge. As far as he knew any thing of the proceedings of the Irish government, there was no deficiency of precautions. These precautions were carried to an extent capable of defeating, not the abortive at-

tempt of the 23d of July alone, but a force of even twenty times the amount, led on with talents, system and consistency of a far superior nature.

Colonel *Craufurd* was adverse to the renewal of the bill without obtaining some information of its necessity, of which there was at present nothing before the House. The sum of this information, if it could be called such, was, that the rebellion was suppressed, and that expectations of the continuance of tranquillity were entertained. This, surely, was a very strange kind of information to offer to the house, as an inducement to pass a bill, which could not be characterised as any other than a measure of severity. The extraordinary negligence of the government of Ireland had been the subject of animadversion this evening, and with the sentiments expressed by his right hon. friend who began the discussion, he most heartily concurred. The hon. secretary of state had endeavoured to shew that such charges were unfounded, and he had rested his argument chiefly on the strength of the garrison, and the facility with which the rebellion had been suppressed. But how did this representation accord with facts. at least with representations which had been given as such to the world. He had been informed, that in the evening on which the insurrection burst forth, the lord lieutenant had gone quietly to his country house as if no danger had been apprehended. The lord chief justice of the King's Bench, though necessarily in the confidence of government, was not at all aware of any insurrection, till the afternoon of the very day on which it exhibited itself in acts of public atrocity. But, this evening the right hon. the secretary of state had in his place declared, that government were aware of the projected insurrection that very day. How this declaration was consistent with the statement now made, he professed himself unable to discover. Credit was taken for the accurate information of ministers respecting the designs of the rebels, but it was admitted that the existence of their powder magazine was a profound secret. It certainly could not be pretended that the government, ignorant of this very important piece of information, could be able to form an estimate, at least a correct one, of the force sufficient for the preservation of the tranquillity of the capital. But, still, ministers were indignant at any charge of negligence or want of sufficiently accurate information. How far they were entitled to be so, he left it for the house to decide. He had been informed of another circumstance, which was certainly

no evidence of the foresight or information of the Irish government. It was very generally reported, that, so accurately were ministers informed of the intended rising of the rebels on the 23d of July, the regiments forming the garrison were provided with only three rounds of ball cartridge, and the yeomanry corps could not get a supply till after an interval of two hours! He had heard also a report, which if true, still more forcibly demonstrated the shameful ignorance of the Irish government respecting the designs of the rebels. It was roundly asserted, that, with the knowledge on the part of ministers of the intended rising on the evening of the 23d, a certain proportion from each company of the regiments forming the garrison, had a few days before been allowed to go to the country to assist in different species of work. Nothing could, in his opinion, more strongly discover a want of foresight; yet ministers took fire at the idea of the conduct of their colleagues in Ireland being censured for a flagrant deficiency of vigilance or talent.—So far was he from agreeing with those who thought that this was not the time for discussing the affairs of Ireland, that he could not help lamenting the fact, that not a single expression had dropped from ministers, expressive of their intention to adopt any measure for the conciliation of the unfortunate inhabitants of that country. The expression in his Majesty's speech, alluding to the contrast between their situation and the situation of nations under the dominion of France, afforded him, and he was sure it would afford the inhabitants of Ireland, no great degree of satisfaction. He had hoped for acts of leniency, instead of the renewal of measures of rigour, which could only keep alive feelings of animosity, instead of inducing the Irish people to return to that cordial allegiance, which could alone render them the bulwarks of the empire. The hon. gent. sat down with saying, that he should give his vote against the bill, unless further information of its necessity were produced.

Mr. *Francis* said, that he could not let a measure of such great importance pass without stating his opinion of it. If his Majesty's ministers have grounds sufficient to support so strong an act against a great portion of our fellow subjects in Ireland, and so alarming to every other part of the empire, they ought to state those grounds to Parliament. In fact, we are called upon to proceed, without evidence, in a manner which nothing but the clearest evidence can justify; that is, to put the kingdom of Ire-

land under martial law, I do not mean, said the hon. gent., to bring any charge against the government of Ireland. Until I know the contrary to be true, I must presume, that they have furnished his Majesty's ministers with facts and proofs adequate to the measure now recommended. What I complain of is, that ministers have not communicated those facts and that evidence, nor even the smallest part of it to the House of Commons. Necessity, I know, supersedes all argument. Let the case be ever so doubtful or questionable, or even criminal, it may find a justification in extreme necessity: but then I say, prove it. You have no right to avail yourself of the plea until you have established the fact. All the evidence I have seen or heard of goes in the opposite direction. The only parliamentary document on this subject that has been laid before the house, is that passage in his Majesty's speech which describes, in terms of the highest satisfaction, a general change in the disposition of his deluded subjects in Ireland, and his gracious confidence in the corrected judgment, of those who had been misled. Out of doors, and even within these few days, I have heard no other language among persons most disposed to favour the present government. But, when I come into this house, I find the case totally reversed. The measure now proposed indicates that Ireland is in such a state, and the occasion so pressing, that nothing less than extreme courses can save it.—If the case be as violent as the remedy supposes, undoubtedly his Majesty's ministers have a right to the remedy. If not, they call upon us to trust them with a dangerous power, which is not wanted, and by the very act of calling for it, run the risk of doing mischief in other senses, and counteracting their own purpose. By empowering the government of Ireland to proclaim martial law, they alienate the affections of the people whom they ought to conciliate, and, in effect, they invite and encourage the enemy to invade the empire in that quarter. For what does the proclamation of martial law in effect say to Buonaparté and to all the world, but that in Ireland we are vulnerable, and that there he may invade us with a certainty of co-operation, and a reasonable prospect of success.

Lord Castlereagh rose to reply to the two last speakers. He began by adverting to the charge of want of proper attention being paid by ministers, or the house, to the situation of Ireland. He really was not aware on what grounds it was that such a charge was adduced. If it was because subjects of a

delicate nature were avoided, and topics of discussion which could only be productive of dissention among a people too often hurried away by their feelings, instead of being guided by their cooler judgment, were abstained from, that the charge of inattention to Irish affairs and Irish interests were supported, he must take the earliest opportunity of protesting against such a doctrine. If any member conceived that any practicable measure could be brought forward for the advantage of Ireland, or any other part of the empire, it was his bounden duty to submit such a measure to the consideration of the house, and it would then be for the wisdom of the legislature to decide on its expediency or its policy. Neglect was not, however, to be imputed to ministers, because they did not feel it their duty to bring circumstances before parliament, to the removal of which they did not imagine any immediate measures to be applicable. Because government did not see the policy of originating some of those measures, which to some hon. members might appear expedient and salutary, that surely was no argument to prove, that the essential interests of Ireland, as far as ministers understood them, were for a single moment overlooked. It would not be argued, that, because comparative unanimity at present prevailed, when the affairs of Ireland were considered, that there was, on the part of the house or ministers, any negligence or inattention to a subject which all admitted to be deeply interesting and important. It was not presuming too much to infer, that this unanimity on this subject, arose from a conviction of the indisputable and imperious necessity of the measures which ministers proposed. He was sure that his right hon. friend did not hold such an opinion. He possessed an understanding too great, and feelings too liberal, to allow him to entertain such an idea for a moment. As to the facts adduced by the hon. officer, he was ready at all times to meet an investigation, and satisfactorily to vindicate the conduct of the government of Ireland. If there was any thing in their conduct at all deserving of censure, let it be fairly stated, and let them be candidly allowed to produce their defence. He took this opportunity, however, of deprecating the discussion of this important subject by a side wind. Let facts be fully and honourably brought forward and not frittered away and distorted. Let the whole conduct of the government of Ireland be considered, combined, and arranged in all its bearings and relations, and then he should be ready to prove, that, instead of censure, it was de-

serving of approbation ; instead of a charge of weakness, a confidence of foresight and energy. He had made these observations with the view of preventing an idea from going abroad, that assertions made with the greatest confidence were true, merely because they might sometimes happen to pass uncontradicted. Leaving these extraneous matters out of further consideration, the house had only to consider the question of the necessity of the renewal of the bill.—The speech of his right hon. friend did not seem to turn so much on this question as on the conduct of the Irish government, a subject which was clearly uppermost in his hon. friend's mind. He begged the attention of the house while he stated what had been the grounds of the previous renewal of the bill. At its first introduction it was supported on the ground of the notoriety of the rebellion, and on that its necessity was admitted. It was renewed in 1799, when, though the rebellion was put down, there were partial insurrections in different parts of the country. At that period he allowed that two reports of a secret committee had been adduced, to prove the necessity of the measure. He must, however, now be permitted to remark, that the expediency of such reports depended a good deal on circumstances. This was a mode of presenting information to the legislature and the public, often highly advantageous. Occasions might occur, however, when to resort to it would be highly impolitic, and even dangerous. In such circumstances he thought that ministers now were placed, as to the propriety of presenting such information as the report of a secret committee would afford. It would be recollected that government was, even at this moment, actively, and he was happy to add, successfully employed in tracing out even the remotest ramifications of the insurrection. While such inquiries were going forward, it would be a matter of peculiar difficulty to frame such a report as would not disclose facts, the disclosure of which would not defeat the views of the government, and, at the same time, prove satisfactory to the legislature and the country. If a report were prematurely brought forward, government might be interrupted in its exertions to trace out the ramifications of rebellion. On the other hand, if the report was not detailed in its nature, it could not afford any criterion for judging of the necessity of a legislative measure, originating out of circumstances of peculiar emergency. To avoid the necessity of such a dilemma, it became necessary to resort to certain general principles, which while they

were consistent with the greatest attachment to the constitution, were not incompatible with the idea of investing the executive government with extraordinary powers, applicable to an extraordinary contingent crisis. He would not deny, that the bill now to be renewed, had never formerly been renewed where there was less actual or visible danger. He had no hesitation in applying this observation to all the periods of the renewal of the bill from the time of its original introduction. On this part of the subject, the noble lord took a review of the various renewals of the bill. Though, however, he admitted that there was less visible danger, though he was happy to be able to state with truth, that the cause of loyalty had received a vast augmentation, while the numbers of the disaffected had materially decreased; still, however, there were traitors and malignant spirits in Ireland, bent on projects of the most atrocious nature. It was to counteract their views, it was to defeat their designs, that he thought the bill, as a wise measure of precautionary power, both expedient and politic. There was one other circumstance which materially strengthened his argument on this subject. He meant to allude to the menaced invasion of the enemy. In former times and in former wars invasion had been often threatened, and perhaps at a certain period of the late war that threat was, to a certain degree, formidable. In no former period, however, had the threat of invasion assumed the same degree of consistency, and never had we to encounter an enemy at once so malignant, and so well prepared for carrying his hostile designs into effect.—He had already adverted to the improved state of Ireland; but past experience demonstrated the imprudence of too flattering expectations of the continuance of this spirit. He wished in no case to depart from constitutional principles, where they could be adhered to with safety; but the safety of the state was a consideration paramount to every other idea. This safety could best be secured by the renewal of the bill. The liberties of the people were as far as possible in every case to be respected; and it was his decided opinion that the renewal of the bill, while it was the most consistent with liberty, was the best pledge for the continuance of tranquillity.—With respect to the observation made by the hon. gent. (Mr. Francis), that the adoption of the present measure would tend to inspirit Buonaparté to make an attempt upon Ireland, as holding out to him the prospect of co-operation in that quarter he entertained no dread on that subject.

He was convinced, that a consciousness in the mind of that man of the odium which uniformly accompanied his footsteps, would point out to him the futility of such an expectation. The inhabitants of Ireland, when they joined their fate with Great Britain, and he, among the rest, anticipated the blessings which would result from that connection; they were convinced, that they enjoyed more happiness than even when they had a legislature of their own. They rested with firm confidence on the vigour of this assembly, and all the loyal inhabitants of Ireland were convinced that it had acted nobly by them.

Colonel *Craufurd*, in explanation, stated that his charge, as to the want of preparation on the part of the Irish government at the breaking out of the insurrection in Dublin, was, that the military were provided only with three rounds of ammunition, and that the yeomanry had none at all for the space of two hours.

Mr. *Pole* did not wish to trouble the house with any observations on the present question. He only meant to set the hon. gent. who had just sat down right, as to the circumstance which he had last mentioned. The hon. gent. had attempted to deceive the house and the public. The fact was, that, previous to the 23d. of July, all the troops in Ireland had been provided with 60 rounds of ammunition each. The Castle of Dublin was no dépôt for military stores, but there had been lodged there 8,000 rounds, for serving such regiments as might have occasion to apply, and, on the first application, ample provision was made; and within less than two hours, more ammunition was supplied than was required to be used during the whole course of the rebellion. He stated this from his own personal knowledge, and pledged himself to the truth of it. He had been employed by the master of the ordnance to make the inquiry, who had been alarmed by a report similar to that stated by the hon. gent.

Colonel *Craufurd* called upon the hon. gent. to say, whether it was parliamentary language, or language which ought to be used by one gentleman to another in that house, to accuse him of an attempt to deceive the house or the public?

Mr. *Pole* explained that he had stated, that the hon. Colonel had deceived the house—he himself being deceived.

Mr. *Windham* said, it did not seem to him that the hon. gent. (Mr. *Pole*) had met the charge of his hon. friend (Colonel *Craufurd*), who did not say, that there was

not ammunition here and there, but spoke respecting the ammunition in the cartouch boxes of the soldiers. That part of the remark had not been answered. When he recurred to the observations of the noble lord, he had not so much to state arguments on the one side, as to speak of the want of them on the other. They were now about to renew martial law in Ireland, without having heard one single word to justify the measure. To vote the re-establishment of martial law seemed to be so much a matter of course, that it required no argument to support it. They stopped the constitution as a miller would stop a wind or a water-mill, and with as little consideration. The constitution was stopt and set a-going, was commanded to march or to halt, with as little ceremony as a colonel would use towards his battalion. He would not say this was wrong, but he wanted to know why it was right. It had been said, that notoriety had been considered a good ground for voting a measure of this nature; this might be very true when rebellion was at the doors of those who voted such a measure, but no such reason existed now, and no other was given for it. They had been told of a danger which was at present invisible; this put him in mind of a dancer, who was described as turning round so quick, that he could not be seen to turn; which led somebody to observe, that perhaps he did not turn round at all; so as to this invisible danger, people might suspect, as nothing could be seen, that there was, perhaps, no danger at all. In the present instance, however, the difficulty was greater. He might discover from the mere light of nature, for to that he was left, the necessity of the present measure; but how was he to collect it from what ministers said? The whole of the inference that was to be drawn from their representations discountenanced the measure. He wished that ministers would tell them when they should have made up their minds upon the subject, whether the late insurrection was really a contemptible riot; a mere effervescence of the moment, and confined to the spot on which it originated, or whether it spread to greater extent, and had taken deep root in the country? He wished that the hon. gentlemen on the other side of the house would deal fairly with them in that respect, and not as at present, play fast and loose; seeking to have the benefit of suppositions both of which could not be true, like the student at one of the universities, who, upon being asked whether the sun went

round the earth, or the earth round the sun, answered, sometimes one and sometimes the other. So in the present case, sometimes ministers said the insurrection was a contemptible riot; at others, it was of such magnitude as to require a martial law bill. How could the house act? If they voted for the bill, they must vote for it in spite of the arguments of the ministers who supported it, and whose description of the event, which made the basis of their measure, was at one time a figure of stature to reach the skies, and, at another, shrunk, like the spirits in Pandemonium, to a pigmy size, hardly capable of being discerned. The vigour of the measure might, according to the opinion of a noble lord (Lord Castlereagh), be a recommendation, and serve better to fulfil that assurance, which he mentioned himself to have given (and which no one could deny, was fully made good in the present instance), viz. that there would be no want of vigorous legislation, in respect to the affairs of Ireland. But whatever might be said of the vigour of this proceeding, which, without a moment's consideration, or a particle of evidence, put a great portion of the empire out of the protection of the constitution, he was afraid that much would not be said or felt, of its kindness. It would be no great proof, either of our respect or sympathy for the people of Ireland, no good illustration of the advantages of the union, that we should be willing to exclude them for the time from the constitution, and put them under martial law, in circumstances of proof in which no man would have ventured to hint at such a thing in respect to this country. Ministers might, perhaps, be satisfied with the panegyrics bestowed on these measures; great powers must be applied to great occasions, and on this ground the principle of arbitrary power might do good; despotism was neither good nor bad in itself, and if angels were always to rule, there would be no objection to it; but, as this could not be the case, men were content to forego the advantages which a more direct and arbitrary use of power might confer, and to take up with the safer and slower operation of laws and free governments. In these measures they must look to the ministers who proposed them, and who were not entitled to confidence at all. If the statements of ministers were to be taken, these measures were not necessary. Here let the house recollect what took place in last July. Previous to the insurrection, they were told by ministers that Ireland was in a continual state

of improvement, and it was to be inferred, that every danger ought to be thrown off their minds. Had any one, at that time, proposed a martial law bill, what would have been thought of his conduct? Yet why not? What had happened since, to change the determination of the house, or to render that necessary which was not necessary at the period above-mentioned? Up to the moment of the 23d of July, the house had been told that all was tranquil in Ireland, and the country in a state of daily improvement. A few days subsequent to that date, news arrives, that an insurrection had broken out; that the lord chief justice had been murdered, and the capital been within an ace of being taken. In the first paroxysm of their fears, ministers speak out, describe the proceedings as a dangerous rebellion, and call for an instant suspension of the *habeas corpus*, and for a martial law bill. As neither of these measures were wanted, for any object at that moment depending, as one of them was a mere measure of general precaution, and the other (the martial law bill) could not be applied to the trials of those already apprehended, with respect to all of whom, it was an *ex post facto* law, there seemed to be no reason, why, according to the ordinary practice of Parliament, the delay of a day should not be allowed for deliberation; a delay which would be nothing with respect to the measure; but was a great deal with respect to the better understanding the event on which the measure was to be founded. On some subjects an additional four-and-twenty hours could add nothing to our knowledge, nor be expected to make much change in our opinion. On the subject of the late peace, for instance, or of the French revolution, a man was not likely to think at the end of any four-and-twenty hours now taken, differently from what he had done at the beginning. It would be useless therefore to delay a decision, with a view to what such an interval might produce. But, in the present case, four-and-twenty hours was nearly equal to the whole period that the event had been known of us, an event, too, on which the letters to every post, were giving us further and better information. On these ideas he had urged, that after an assurance to his Majesty, of the determination of the house to support his Majesty against all dangers, and to adopt whatever measures should be necessary for that purpose, they should have paused till the next day, to determine what those measures ought to be. This proposal was over-ruled, and he was treated as little less than a person disaffected, who before

a bill was passed, such as the martial law bill, could suggest the propriety of a moment's delay, till his Majesty's ministers should have settled in their own minds, whether the event in question was a serious rebellion, or only an accidental riot. The decision was now made for an accidental riot. And it was declared, that from some causes or other, from the security necessarily exercised, and which, it seems, have had the effect, not only of intimidating and cutting off the usual effects of severity, but even of *conciliating* the disaffected, Ireland was in a better state than ever, less filled with a disposition to mischief, and with better means of resisting, should any be attempted. The consequence of all this would seem to be, that a suspension of the habeas corpus, and a martial law bill, which were not necessary before the 23d of July, must be still further from being necessary now. And this inference was further confirmed, by the circumstance so much insisted upon by ministers, that the powers granted at the period alluded to, had never been acted upon, but in one instance. He was the farthest from meaning to contend, that a power not acted upon, and a power not possessed, were one and the same thing; or, that a power known to be possessed, might not produce great effects, even though it should never be called forth into action. But, at least, it must be admitted, that a power so circumstanced, that is to say, which in the course of many months had never been wanted, or never used, was not one, which required such hasty proceedings, as those which took place at the period above referred to, or which could claim to be renewed, without one single fact or argument adduced to shew that it was necessary. If no facts or arguments were adduced, as little could it be said, that the house had any authority to act upon. The authority, if any, must be that of his Majesty's ministers; and what must their authority be held to be, whose total ignorance or criminal neglect had exposed the capital of part of the empire to be within an ace of being surprised, (he was glad to repeat the expression) at a moment when they were preaching every where the tranquil state of the country. This topic, the hon. gentleman wished to get rid of, by a new kind of doctrine, namely, that nothing should be said of the conduct of ministers, unless produced in the shape of a distinct charge. He had no objection to distinct charges, wherever the magnitude of the object, the circumstances of the case, and the time of the house would admit of them; which latter consideration alone might, in

the multitude of charges liable to be made against the hon. gentlemen, be a reason against that course. But however this might be, it would be a whimsical rule to lay down, that *unless* these charges, or *until* these charges were brought, no observations were to be made upon the conduct of men in public stations, even where their conduct furnished, as in the case before them, an argument essentially interwoven with the subject in discussion. The authority of ministers constituted, in the present instance, all the public and parliamentary grounds which the house had to stand upon. It was of some consequence, therefore, to ascertain what that authority was; and no single instance could better illustrate it, than that which was afforded by the 23d of July. He was amazed at the account which government had finally resolved to give of that transaction. They had to choose between neglect and surprise. If they knew nothing of what was coming on, if they were really in the opinion, which they thought proper to profess, that all was tranquil in Ireland, and nothing meditating against the government, then they were surprised, and must take the shame which belongs to that confession. If, on the contrary, they chose to disclaim this ignorance of the state of the country, and this want of information as to what was passing under their noses, then they must confess a degree of neglect, not merely disgraceful, but such as was in the strictest sense criminal. To his utter astonishment they made their election for the neglect. Having the choice of two interpretations, being returned, as it were, for two places, the one which they chose, the one for which they finally took their seat, was that which put them in the situation of declaring, that knowing the mischief to be coming on, knowing that an insurrection was likely to take place, they calmly and advisedly suffered it to take its course, neglecting those precautions, which would have saved the life of the chief justice, and have put the city in a state of perfect security; instead of leaving it, as they did, to be preserved by the merest chance from falling into the hands of the rebels. This account of the transaction, as given by the hon. gentleman, was striking in the first instance, from the utter impossibility of reconciling it with known and acknowledged facts. It was not very easy to understand, how that could be otherwise than a surprise, which found the lord mayor without notice; the commander-in-chief without instructions, at least without permission freely to act upon his instructions; the troops, in part, without ammunition; and

the lord-lieutenant absent from the castle. He was prepared to say, that much of the ammunition supplied to the yeomanry (troops that had their full share in what was done) was not brought to them till after the action had commenced, and when there was the most imminent risk, that both the ammunition itself, as well as those who escorted it, would have been intercepted by the rebels. If this was not a surprise, he should be glad to know, what in the ministerial vocabulary was to be so denominated. But the account was not less singular, if adopted by the hon. gentleman, on any principle of choice. On what possible supposition was the lord-lieutenant's absence from the castle to be accounted for, if not on that of surprise, and of his being ignorant of the explosion which was about to take place? What! the lord-lieutenant absent at his country house, at a moment when he knew that an insurrection was likely to break out in the city! And this the statement made by his friends! He could only say, in the words of Hamlet, 'I would not hear thine enemy say so.' He would not have so shocked the ears of a right hon. gentleman opposite to him (Mr. Yorke) or have so isolated his own convictions, as to have advanced an opinion, pregnant with such injurious reflections, to the noble lord at the head of the Irish government. But, in whatever way the fact was to be accounted for, to whichever change the government would choose to plead guilty, their authority upon the subject of Irish affairs was at an end. If the measure proposed was to be adopted, it must be, not in consequence of the representations made by government, but in spite of them. They had described the proceedings of the 23d of July as a contemptible riot: that had declared the state of the country to have been improved by those proceedings, instead of being made worse. The best plea which they could urge, and one certainly which they would be able to make out, was, that they knew nothing of the matter. Yet, in this state of things, the house was called upon to vote a martial law bill, without a single proof adduced of the necessity of it, and upon grounds too that would equally serve for any other time as well as the present. For if this measure was to be, as the noble lord had declared, precautionary, and that that precaution was to be founded upon the mere fact of an insurrection having broken out, this fact would continue to be true to the end of time; and whenever it could be coupled with a war, might be made the foundation of a measure such as was then proposed. It was impossible to say, how long, according to the pre-

sent mode of reasoning, its influence in that respect might last.—Upon the whole, the measure as now proposed, was utterly without foundation to stand on. What it might be in itself, was not so properly the object of inquiry. He could very well conceive, judging from views the very reverse of those commonly held out by the hon. gentlemen, that the course proposed, desperate as it was, *might* be necessary. He was afraid, at least, in so critical a case, to say that it was not so. Contrary, therefore, to the general rule, which would direct in every case, and still more in one like the present, the rejection of every measure, of which no strong reason had been urged for the support, he should acquiesce in the one now proposed, protesting against the manner in which it had been brought forward, and begging to have it understood, that so far as he might concur in it, it was for reasons wholly different from those which could be derived from the language or conduct of the hon. gentlemen.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer.—Sir; in the observations which I feel it my duty to offer to the house, it is my intention to follow the example set me by my noble friend near me (lord Castlereagh) and to sever the consideration of the conduct of the Irish government, respecting the insurrection of the 23d of July, from the merits of the measure now before the house; and to make that conduct, whatever it may have been, the subject of a distinct charge. However, as it has been, in this instance, brought into view, I think it necessary most distinctly to declare my opinion, that the proceedings of the high characters, to whom the management of Irish affairs are entrusted, will be found to have been, in the instance alluded to, perfectly justifiable; that they acted with the most laudable judgment; that they had procured full information of the plan of the insurrection, and had provided means amply adequate to defeat its object. That the lord-lieutenant, after having taken every necessary precaution, thought proper to retire to his seat in the Phoenix-park, I am ready to admit; but that such retirement betrayed any degree of inattention to the wants or security of the state and the city of Dublin, I do most decidedly contradict, because I am satisfied, that every measure was taken, that the most deliberate investigation, and the most active vigilance could suggest. The civil power was prepared, and the army, as was seen by the result of the insurrection, was in a complete state of readiness. The superintendent magistrate of Dublin, was, at an early period of the day on which the insurrection took place, apprised by the Irish government, that

such an event was expected, and the police of Dublin was in consequence prepared. The right hon. gentleman who has just sat down is, therefore, unfounded in the assertion, that no communication whatever was made of the design of the rebels to the civil power, until the very moment the rebellion broke out. The lord-lieutenant of Ireland having taken every proper step of preparation for the public security, there was one other important object to which it was the duty of his excellency to attend, namely, to guard against popular alarm, by avoiding any ostentatious proceeding that might betray exaggerated fear; for such a conduct, he must be aware, would tend to encourage the rebels, by inducing them to think more highly of their own powers, and perhaps to throw the city of Dublin into a state of consternation that might weaken their power, and diminish their competency to resist the danger. Such effects would have very probably arisen, had the lord-lieutenant declined going, according to his usual habit, to his seat in the park. I, therefore, am warranted in contending, that it was wise in the lord-lieutenant to return to his country house, and not to remain in the metropolis, which would have given rise to reports and conjectures, dangerous in their nature and consequences. But having made these statements, in answer to the assertions of the right hon. gentleman, I must once more remark, that they have no connexion whatever with the question before the house, which is simply this, whether it is expedient to continue the act under consideration without the preliminary proceeding of an inquiry before a committee, as to the necessity which calls for it. To the appointment of such a committee, I must object, because the necessity is obvious, and because the same measure of precaution, which this bill proposes, has, in many instances, been adopted without any previous inquiry. It was so on the first suspension of the *habeas corpus* act, at the commencement of the last war, and on several other occasions, which must be within the recollection of the hon. gentlemen on the other side, and in most of which, the right hon. gentleman, who last addressed the house, took a very active part; and his hon. friend, who sat near him (Mr. Elliot) was not less active, in similar cases, as a member of the Irish parliament. From such gentlemen, therefore, the loud call for inquiry into the grounds of necessity which pressed for this measure, which are notorious, and certainly much stronger than at any of the various periods when a like proceeding was resorted to, comes with a very ill grace, and

must excite some astonishment on the score of consistency. When the martial law bill was continued immediately after the union, no inquiry such as that now demanded took place. Parliament acceded to the bill then, on the assurance of the representatives of Ireland, that it was proper and necessary. The right hon. gent. (Mr. Windham) was then in office, and joined in resisting the proposition of inquiry, and indeed one's surprise at his present recommendations is aggravated by the recollection of the arguments he then employed to justify his opposition to inquiry; arguments founded entirely on the known circumstances of the times and of the Irish nation; and can the right hon. gent. I will ask, pretend to maintain, that those circumstances were by any means so strong as the present time offered, a time when invasion is impending and disaffection is actually existing in Ireland? Why then, in such a state of our affairs, should the right hon. gent. persist in arguing, that no such measure as that which he himself supported upon much less ground of necessity, ought to be introduced to the house without the preliminary of a committee of inquiry? In July, the house assented to the enactment of this law, upon the authority of a message from the throne, and the lord-lieutenant's proclamation respecting the rebellion, which referred to the massacre of Lord Kilwarden. Since then the details of the several trials had furnished the house and the country with the most satisfactory evidence of the necessity of the proceedings. But the hon. gent. (Mr. Elliot) argued as if no rebellion or disaffection of any magnitude, sufficient to justify the grant of such extraordinary powers to the Irish government, did really exist, because the Irish attorney-general thought proper, in the course of his address to the jury on a particular trial, to describe the insurrection of the 23d of July, as the desperate effort of a few turbulent men; but it cannot be admitted that such a description from any man, however respectable, should exclude all reference to the nature of the evidence. If such a doctrine were to obtain credit, it would lead to conclusions at once absurd and mischievous. If such language as that of the hon. gentlemen respecting the preference of the authority of the attorney-general's statement on the occasion alluded to, that of the witnesses examined on the several trials, was used by the judge on any of these trials: if, for instance, his lordship were to say to the jury, "You are to attend to and form your judgment on the address of the attorney-general, putting entirely out of your minds the statements of the evi-

dence," what, I beg to know from the hon. gentlemen themselves, would be their sentiments upon such a singular recommendation from the bench? And yet their language in the course of the debate was of precisely a similar import. I make these observations merely to show the sort of argument which those hon. gentlemen are apt to use, when it suits their pleasure to oppose the propositions of his Majesty's ministers. With respect to the expression in his Majesty's speech, that tranquillity is happily restored in Ireland, I will say, that the justice of that statement is perfectly maintainable, without impairing in any degree, the force of the arguments now relied on for the re-enactment of the measure under discussion. It is known that the rebellion was put down, that its leaders and the greater part of its principal agents have been brought to justice, and that although much of disaffection is understood to pervade the Irish nation, yet tranquillity nevertheless exists; but is not the existence of that tranquillity to be secured by precisely the same means to which the country was indebted for its attainment, by the precautionary measures which formed the subject of the present debate? And surely it is not unfair or irrational to say, that these measures have contributed a large share in restoring peace to Ireland, and that they will materially tend to preserve that peace we have the strongest reasons to believe. There is nothing in his Majesty's speech that implies an opinion that disaffection did not exist in Ireland; or that it was not necessary to invest the Irish government with the extraordinary powers of the bill before the house; on the contrary, such powers were deemed essentially necessary, to enable that government effectually to repel an invading enemy, and to repress domestic treason. In announcing the restoration of tranquillity in Ireland, it was very natural for the paternal mind of his Majesty to feel, and benevolently to express a hope that, notwithstanding the disaffection that unhappily prevailed, his deluded subjects would return to their allegiance; and this hope was, in a great degree, justified by the improvement which was known to have taken place in the public mind in Ireland; but this improvement was not such as to induce ministers to believe that it would as yet be safe to relax the powers of the Irish government, for I am still of opinion that a much greater share of disaffection at present exists in Ireland, than ever did in this country at any of the various periods when precautionary measures, similar to that under debate, were very properly enacted, and particularly dur-

ing the right hon. gentleman's connexion with the cabinet. That nothing has been conveyed by his Majesty's speech, so often referred to, and so unjustly commented upon, and that nothing has in any manner come from his Majesty's ministers to contravene the opinion that a great deal of disaffection is to be found in Ireland, which renders it necessary to arm the Irish government with extraordinary powers, I will most decidedly maintain; yet the right hon. gent. has charged ministers with holding one kind of language at the commencement of the session, and another kind to support the measure under consideration, with, according to the right hon. gentleman's own phrase, "riding fast and loose." But in reply to the remark accusing ministers of inconsistency with respect to the statement of the rebellion, I must observe, that it is greatly exaggerated by the right hon. gentleman; that it is by no means so formidable as this discussion would imply, although it is of such a size and magnitude as to justify the proceedings of the Irish government, and to call on a wise legislature for the assent so promptly given to the grant of powers which that government thought it necessary for the public safety, and to enable them to prevent an evil which, co-operating with the attacks and stratagems of an invading enemy, might be productive of incalculable mischief. With respect then to the amount and extent of the Irish rebellion, I repeat that it is very far short of the description of the right hon. gentleman, but yet sufficient to render it the duty of government to bring forward the measure before the house. I will seriously ask any man, whether the insurrection of the 23d of July, was not the symptom of such a disposition, as might break forth, if not closely watched and guarded against, by the provisions of such a measure as the right hon. gentleman opposes? To remove all doubts of the necessity which he has questioned, it is enough to refer the right hon. gentleman to the evidence upon the several trials, which display so clearly the temper of the insurgents, to these facts, that are quite notorious to the country, and to the peculiar circumstances in which it is at present placed. After such a review, who can entertain a doubt of the propriety of taking immediate and vigorous measures to avert the calamities which the state of things menace. Such indeed was the influence of those circumstances upon the minds of those to whom the government of Ireland was committed, combined with the knowledge they had of the disposition of the Irish people, that I can assure the house it

was matter of doubt with many of those respectable personages, even before the insurrection of the 23rd of July, whether they should not state to government here, the propriety of recommending to Parliament the adoption of precisely the same powers and provisions which that insurrection rendered so essentially necessary, and which it is the object of the bill before the house to re-enact. I know that the expediency of proposing the suspension of the habeas corpus act, previous to the unfortunate event in July, was in the contemplation of the noble Lord who held the seals in that country, who had full opportunity of judging of the state of the public mind, and who cannot be suspected of any inclination to adopt a measure which would abridge the liberty of the subject, without the conviction of strong necessity—a necessity which now exists too notoriously to be denied. The hon. gentlemen do not indeed directly deny it, but they call for the formality of evidence to prove it. What, can it be said, that at this crisis it is not necessary to give every possible strength to the executive government in Ireland, when it is recollected that an enemy, who is ever active in his exertions to annoy us, and who meditates an invasion, which, if he means at all to execute, Ireland is his object, and the season is now come when he will probably make the attempt? Under such circumstances, I will put it to the good sense of the House, whether there can be any excuse for hesitating to accede to the motion in debate, and to give to the government of Ireland all the strength that is requisite to enable it to encounter with effect the danger with which that country is threatened? I again call upon gentlemen to separate in their minds the question as to the conduct of the Irish government in July, and the policy of assenting to the present measure; and in reply to the calls for a preliminary inquiry into the grounds of necessity, I answer, that notoriety, connected with the enemy's preparations and avowed objects, furnish sufficient grounds to sustain the assertion, that circumstances imperiously demand such measures as ministers have on this occasion, submitted to Parliament; and I can shew, from a retrospect of the conduct of the legislature for the last ten years, that notoriety was held in several instances as a sufficient ground to justify the introduction of bills to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act, and that too in cases which were defended by the right hon. gentleman who spoke last and where the notoriety was far from being as strong as that which exists at present. As to the principle of appointing a Commit-

tee of Inquiry, I perfectly agree in the opinion of my noble friend (Lord Castlereagh), that such appointments should not be made on light grounds. The House is bound to avoid it, unless the necessity should be urgent, and unless the result of such inquiry should promise to be satisfactory, by fully gratifying the just curiosity of the House. But, if in the present case a committee of inquiry were appointed, it must be a confidential committee, and it would be quite competent to ministers, although with some difficulty, to lay before such a committee such materials as would be sufficient to convince their minds of the necessity which called for the measures under consideration; but still the report could not afford to the hon. gentlemen, who were so anxious for the committee, the satisfaction they seemed to desire; for such a report must necessarily be general as to the necessity, before it could go into such a specification as the hon. gentlemen demanded, without revealing the communication confidentially made to the committee; a communication which would lead to the most serious mischief. There is in fact no detailed information upon this point, which it would not be injurious to publish: therefore, there is nothing which, consistently with prudence, the hon. gentlemen could obtain from the report of a committee, which they have not already; namely, a statement in general terms of that necessity, the pressure of which is quite manifest, and from these considerations I shall resist the preliminary which the hon. gentlemen wish for previous to giving their assent to the motion of my right hon. friend.—With regard to the allusions made to the peace of Amiens, as at all tending to produce the present state of things, I will ever continue to repel the charge which upon that ground has so often been levelled at his Majesty's ministers, and contend that very different consequences are deducible from that treaty to those which the right hon. gentleman who has just sat down, and his friends, are in the habit of ascribing to it. Ministers, I am confident, have never had reason to feel any regret for the advice which, upon the occasion of that treaty, they thought it their duty to offer to his Majesty.—With respect to the proposition before the House, I contend, that none of the objections advanced against it are tenable upon sound principles of reasoning, or upon precedent, particularly upon the precedents of late years, when the melancholy necessity for similar measures has so often occurred.—There is one circumstance I have yet to mention, which, in my mind, is worthy of great attention. It

is rather singular that in the last session of parliament, most of the gentlemen in this House belonging to Ireland, gave strong assurances, that the mind and disposition of the great mass of the Irish people were much improved and alienated from discontent and disaffection. From that opinion, however, one gentleman, and one gentleman only, dissented; and it is now but three days ago, that the gentleman to whom I allude (Mr. J. C. Beresford) took the opportunity of correcting his mistake, and declaring that his opinion had undergone a complete change; and notwithstanding that alteration of sentiment, his observations strongly tended to enforce the necessity of the present bill. For although he says he is convinced of the improvement which has taken place in the public mind, yet he urges the adoption of this measure, as absolutely necessary to preserve the tranquillity of all the loyal people of property in Ireland. I beg pardon, Sir, for having detained the House so long upon a subject, which I could not imagine would have experienced so serious an opposition; and I have only to state my conscientious conviction, that it is indispensably requisite for the present safety of that part of the United Kingdom.

Mr. *Wilberforce* expressed his opinion upon the grand distinction which should be made between the civil and military code: that there was no ground of doubt why the measure should not be carried into effect. In the organization, breaking out, and progress of past insurrection, he found a complete justification for voting in the affirmative. With respect to the argument set up by a right hon. gentleman, that some grounds should be stated to the House, it was only necessary for him to remark, that the bill was supported by the same constitutional system which enabled his Majesty to proclaim martial law and to call for the aid of all his subjects in case of the enemy's landing. He did not coincide in the sentiments of the right hon. gentleman, who had argued, that a despotic government would be the best of all governments, if administered by angels. For his own part, he was convinced that the nature of despotism was so bad, and tended so much to corruption, that he preferred the British constitution, administered even as it was, to the despotic government of angels. He thought the House was called upon to bestow the most serious consideration upon the state of Ireland: for it was a melancholy reflection, that a country which had been connected for several hundred years with this, enjoying the same benefits, and in possession of the same constitution, should be afflicted

with such evils and calamities. The causes of its distresses were certainly well worthy of the mature consideration of the British Parliament. He felt himself called upon to say, that the wisdom, benevolence, and justice of Parliament, could not be more urgently required. He hoped no temporary expedients would be resorted to, but that a wise, liberal, and enlarged system of policy would be adopted, which might make the people of that country permanently happy.

Dr. *Laurence*, after expressing his agreement with the concluding sentiments of the last speaker, vindicated his right hon. friend (Mr. Windham) from the charge of inconsistency. With regard to the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, it was a measure of a very different nature from the present. That was a measure of precaution, this of punishment, and of punishment in a manner which was looked upon by the constitution with peculiar jealousy. It was barely tolerated, never praised. An assertion had been made that similar bills had been passed by the United Parliament without enquiry. This assertion was not borne out by the fact. He had himself on a former occasion voted for the measure, because, from the proclamation, he was led to believe that a necessity existed. But what document was there before the House to prove the existence of any such necessity at this moment? The evidence, such as it was, led to a contrary conclusion. It was now acknowledged, that the murder of Lord Kilwarden was not the effect of a premeditated plan, but had taken place from his being the first person who was presented to the fury of the mob. But it was on the ground of the law being more directly struck at in the person of one of its chief administrators, that he had voted for the Martial Law Bill. On the other side, a hope had been expressed by his Majesty, that his deluded subjects were returning to a state of obedience. By one gentleman the notoriety of the necessity had been urged; by another it had been stated that an invisible necessity existed. (Lord Castlereagh here said, that he had not called it an invisible necessity, he had said that there was a necessity though not visible). The hon. member then proceeded to say, that he would leave the noble Lord to explain to the House the distinction, and, in compliment to him, would use the term non-visible, instead of invisible. The necessity was not visible, and the notoriety which had been mentioned was, he supposed, not audible. The law it was acknowledged, had never been acted upon, but in one solitary instance, and in that one instance he would assert, that it had been

misapplied. It had been directed to the punishment of a man who had attempted to seduce the soldiers from their allegiance; an act, which, though perhaps, even more criminal than open violence, did not come within the meaning of the statute. The hon. member noticed the assertion made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that it had been in the contemplation of some members of the Irish government to propose the enactment of Martial Law previous to the 23d of July, and he contrasted it with the declaration of the right hon. gent. only five days before the insurrection, that there was more loyalty in Ireland than ever, and that tranquillity was perfectly secure. Should a distinct enquiry into the business of the 23d of July ever take place, he hoped the right hon. gentleman would take for his defence, ground a little more tenable than that on which he stood at present. With respect to the measure now before the House, he wished the House to consider what had been the policy of our ancestors, when called upon for extraordinary powers, even under circumstances of great danger. In the reign of Edward III. ministers came to the House for advice, and stated, that in divers counties, cities, and towns, ill-disposed men had leagued together, and sworn, when they should receive news agreeable to their desires, to rise, to rob and murder their neighbours, and procure a general insurrection throughout the land. This was at a period when the King was with his army in France, and the news, which was desired by the ill-disposed, was no less than the ruin of that army, at the head of which was the Sovereign. In this situation what was done by the House of Commons? Did it declare martial law? No. It answered that if the guardians of the peace were not capable of performing their duty, they must be reinforced by others more sufficient, and that no persons arrested must be released on bail till they were delivered by persons of sufficiency, and the most respectable of the county, such as knights and sergeants. This last clause was in effect a mitigated suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. Such was the wisdom of our ancestors. Here was no recourse to martial law, a sort of law, which, even in its best form, was alien to the constitution. But, the martial law they were now called on to sanction, was of an aggravated nature. It had none of those checks which had been carefully introduced into the old martial law to modify and correct the virulence of its operation. The learned member then entered into a view of martial law. It took its rise, he said, from the ancient

Courts of Chivalry, and the administration of it was originally presided over by a person professing the law. Under the Mutiny Bill, courts martial were to consist of thirteen officers, and one of them was to be a field-officer; thus preserving the appearance of a judge and jury. The culprit too, was entitled to a copy of the proceedings and the sentence. In short, there had been always an endeavour to make the martial law as like the constitutional law as possible. In the present instance all these ideas were abandoned. Courts martial were allowed to be formed by a smaller number of officers, than under the Mutiny Bill, was allowed in any part of the British dominions, with the exception only of the slave coast and Botany Bay, where, from circumstances, it was impossible to apply the general rule. From the first of these places, he was sure one hon. member (Mr. Wilberforce), would not be ready to draw any precedent; and he was himself, and he believed the House would be, as little disposed to take one from the second. It was utterly impossible to assign any reason why, in a country like Ireland, where so large an army was stationed, so small a number of officers was allowed to form a court martial. A want of officers could certainly not be pleaded. The learned member then urged the impolicy of suffering martial law to remain in existence a moment longer than was absolutely necessary. To shorten the dominion of the sword, and to bring back society to its original state, had always been the wish of every wise legislator. In the opinion of mankind no disgrace attached to the memory of those who fell in a state of warfare. But very different was the case of those who suffered by the operation of the laws. A solemn verdict of persons, who perhaps, were their neighbours, of men without passion or prejudice, established their guilt, and their names were for ever branded with ignominy. This was felt by one of the leaders of the late insurrection (Emmet) when he was taken, and an apology was made for his being hurt in the struggle, he replied, that everything was fair in war; but when he was sentenced by a jury of his countrymen, his feelings were very different: conscious of the shame that was incurred by his end, he desired that no man might write his epitaph. Having enforced, at considerable length, the various heads of argument, the hon. member concluded by expressing his disapprobation of the measure now before the House.

General Loftus considered the bill before the House merely as a measure of precaution, and by no means one upon which the

noble lord at the head of the administration in Ireland would be disposed to act without the most urgent and indispensable necessity. He knew that noble lord, and was convinced of his disposition. He was a member of the Irish parliament when a similar measure was originally enacted. He had the honour also of serving as a general on the staff in that country when the noble lord opposite to him was chief secretary (Lord Castlereagh;) and he could assure the House, that even then, when the country was very generally agitated by a rebellious disposition, martial law was only resorted to in those counties or districts where the King's judges were prevented by insurrection from going their regular circuits, to carry into effect the common law of the land. The government of Ireland, he was well assured, would not resort to it but when it was found absolutely necessary for the preservation of the state.

The *Attorney-General* observed, that the whole of the hon. and learned gentleman's arguments were directed against the bill, as if it were intended to be carried into adoption permanently and universally throughout Ireland: whereas it was merely intended to be temporary, and only to be acted on in such places as those wherein the ordinary process of the law should be impeded; so far, however, from its being a measure subversive of the common law, or tending to supersede generally the ordinary course of justice, it was in fact solely intended as a measure auxiliary to the common law, and tending to protect its administration by proceeding in the summary process of martial law in districts where rebellion or insurrection should render the process of the ordinary law impracticable. He could not avoid considering the arguments this night offered against the adoption of this bill, as very extraordinary, considering the period at which, and the persons from whom, they came, and more especially from the right hon. gentleman opposite to him, (Mr. Windham,) who was a member of his Majesty's government, when a measure exactly similar to the present was first introduced, and was himself one of its most strenuous advocates and defenders. The right hon. gentleman, this night was loud and vehement in his reprobation of this bill, and in his declaration, that it most undoubtedly was a measure which violated the constitution, and ought not to pass in the present posture of affairs. He remembered, however, when a similar measure was proposed during the administration of the right hon. gentleman; and when it was resisted by the opposition of that day, as one calculated to exasperate the people of

Ireland, and to dispose them still more to rebellion, the right hon. gentleman's language was—"who is it we are to conciliate? Is it those who are conspiring in rebellion against us, and against those whom we know to be the loyal supporters and friends of government? In favour of whom is it that we are called on to relax in exercising the powers of government? Is it in favour of traitors, to the abandonment of our loyal fellow subjects?" From this language of the right hon. gentleman, upon a former occasion, he begged leave to furnish himself with arguments this night in support of this bill; and he would ask if there was a loyal man this night in Ireland, who could conceive, from the passing of this bill, the most slight cause to abate in his loyalty and attachment to government and if, on the contrary, it would not be received as an additional pledge to every loyal subject, of the care and protection of the government. He was clearly of opinion, that the people of Ireland would not be satisfied that parliament had done its duty, if it were to separate without passing the measure.

Mr. *Windham* wished the honourable and learned gentleman to consider, that if he meant to expose the opinions of any one, he must take care to state them correctly: for that otherwise the triumph which he would obtain, would be a triumph only over himself. He (Mr. W.) had never said, that the measure in question, though proper in itself, ought to be rejected, because it would be complained of by those, on whom it was likely to operate. He had never said, as a foundation for such an opinion, that the measure in question was proper. On the other hand, he was as little inclined to say, that it was improper. What he complained of was, that proper or otherwise, the House was adopting it without proof.

The Hon. *C. Hely Hutchinson*.—Sir, while I highly admire the display of talent which has characterised this debate, I cannot but be of opinion, that many of the observations which have been made, might have been well spared. I confess, Sir, that I felt during a great part of the discussion as a parent who had been just deprived of a beloved child, with the physician seated by me, detailing the circumstances, and reminding me of the agonies under which my child had perished: whilst I eagerly watched the opportunity to exclaim; "spare me, Sir, this torturing and now unavailing narrative; my child is gone—that loss is irretrievable: but in the name of God, try and avert the ravages of a cruel disease from the rest of my family;" and in the same

manner should I be inclined to address the gentlemen of this House, "no more of the severity of this measure, of which happily for you, you cannot judge of the necessity by a reference to anything which passes here. No more of the useless detail of the outrages and atrocities which have lately disgraced that unhappy country; for her crimes and her sufferings, she has much to mourn; but the past cannot be recalled; in the name of mercy, then, save her from again plunging into the guilt of rebellion, and incurring its heavy penalties."—I perfectly agree with those who consider the re-enactment of the present bills as a most extraordinary exertion of legislative power such a one, as in the judgment of a Briton may almost appear unconstitutional; but Sir, the hon. gent. (Mr. Wilberforce) under the gallery, has given the true reason, why a measure, which in this country would be exclaimed against as most severe, becomes unfortunately necessary for Ireland; namely, that its state is not like that of England: no, Sir, there exists between the conditions of the two countries a melancholy dissimilitude, and it is only because I fear that the sad necessity exists for thus strengthening the hands of the executive in that country, that I am induced to give my consent to the passing of the bills before the House; I do so in the hope, however, in the sanguine expectation, that the wisdom and justice of the United Parliament towards Ireland, will at length, confer upon her those blessings to which she anxiously, and I must be allowed to add, justly, looks; and that, by devising for her a system of extensive and harmonized polity, such as will ensure for the future the happiness and tranquillity of that people, a recurrence to such measures as these before us, will be rendered unnecessary at any future period.—I will not rake up the ashes of the dead, for the purpose of accusing your ancestors of cruelty and impolicy in the system they had adopted towards Ireland; I am ready with my countrymen to forget our sufferings, and to forgive our oppressors; and I do most solemnly declare, that in looking wistfully to the future, I have no object but the prosperity of my country, and the consolidated strength of the empire.—The proper subject for the consideration of Parliament is speedily to inquire as to what ought to be done to ameliorate the situation of Ireland. It has been observed during the debate, that "an improvement had taken place in the public mind, and that a better disposition was rapidly growing up there;" but I caution gentlemen not to allow themselves to be de-

ceived as to the nature of that disposition; true, indeed: it was an increasing and improving disposition as against Buonaparté and his accursed satellites; but it did not, therefore, incline the more favourably towards a system truly vicious and defective, and approved by no honest, thinking man. The inhabitants of Ireland, when by the Union they joined their fate with that of Britain, were, indeed, taught to anticipate the blessings, as a noble lord (Castlereagh) has justly observed, which would result from such a connexion; but I positively deny, that in these their expectations, they have been satisfied; on the contrary, they have not advanced one step towards their accomplishment; it would, therefore, be preposterous to suppose, and most wicked to attempt to induce the House to believe, that there was a growing disposition of content and satisfaction, when there was every ground for the reverse; and I implore gentlemen not to be persuaded into any such most dangerous opinion.—We who are deputed on the part of Ireland to assert her rights, or uphold her interests, and to enforce her claims, appear amongst you in consequence of the most solemn engagements made to us on the part of your King and of the nation.—I complain of the neglect and duplicity of the present ministers, which if not calculated to alienate the affections, have, at least, marred the hopes: but I trust not irrevocably destroyed the confidence of the Irish people. I trust it is not in the power of those who have proffered Union to be the cause of separation, and having sworn to uphold the throne of their Sovereign and Master, they will not I hope, be suffered by their conduct to endanger the integrity of his empire. The responsibility they have incurred is possibly more than they are aware of. They are not to compare themselves with any other minister who had ever had to advise as to the management of Ireland; and should they persevere in their neglect and indifference to the interests of that country, he should hope to see them one day at the bar of another house, where the penalties, however heavy, which they might incur, would be but a poor and inadequate atonement for the mischiefs which the prosecution of their present system is likely to entail upon the United Empire.—I venture to hope, that as so many gentlemen have so humanely adverted to Ireland, and have manifested a generous interest in her fate, that the house will speedily consider the means of relieving her; that while they give additional strength to the executive, they will, at the

same time, think of administering some comfort to the people; for surely it is not unbecoming the dignity of any government, or the wisdom of any legislature to prove that it combines the power to repress rebellion, with the determined disposition to remove all ground of complaint and dissatisfaction. Such is the course which any good government would gladly pursue, and which ministers, were they actuated by the principles of humanity, and an unnnarrowed attachment to the *entire* of the empire, they would not fail immediately to adopt.—The question was then put and carried; the bill was read a second time, and ordered to be committed to a committee of the whole House to-morrow.

[*BANK RESTRICTION BILL.*]—Mr. Sargent brought up the report of the Bank of England Restriction Bill. On reading the amendment, which makes the duration of the Bill six months after the conclusion of peace.

Sir *William Elford* called the attention of the House to an important alteration in this bill from that of the last year, which took place in a very thin committee on Saturday last. It was in filling up the blank for the duration of the bill, by the insertion of the words "six months," after the ratification of the Treaty of peace, instead of "six weeks," which was the time expressed in the last bill. He did not mean to oppose the alteration, but felt it his duty to call the attention of the House, as it had been made in so very thin a committee.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* admitted that the alteration alluded to by the hon. member, was certainly important: but he trusted the house would agree with him that it was also necessary. It had been thought inconvenient to make the bill continue only for six weeks after peace, because, if that should happen in the recess, and it should be found inconvenient to allow the bank to pay off in cash so soon afterwards, Parliament must assemble for that very purpose; whereas, if Parliament should be sitting, and six months should appear too long, the time might be shortened, for there was power to vary or repeal the bill at any time contained in the bill itself.—After a few words from Mr. Vansittart and Mr. Swann, the amendment was agreed to. The bill was ordered to be engrossed, and read a third time to-morrow, if then engrossed.

HOUSE OF LORDS

Tuesday, December 6.

Counsel were heard in continuation, and finally, respecting the Scotch Appeal, *Christie v. Proudfoot*, viz. Messrs. Romilly and

Nolan, on the part of the Respondant, and Mr. Adam for the Appellant, in reply.—After the arguments of Counsel were concluded, the Lord Chancellor moved for the Affirmation of the decree, with 60*l.* costs which was ordered accordingly.—Lord Walsingham moved the first reading of the *Seamen's Habeas Corpus Bill*, which took place accordingly; and afterwards, that the bill be printed for the use of their Lordships. Ordered.—Mr. Graham presented at the bar an account of the state of convicts on board the hulks at Woolwich and at Portsmouth, from Christmas 1802, until Michaelmas last.—Mr. Robinson, from the London Wet Docks Company, presented an account of the receipts and disbursements of the same for one year, being from the 1st of June 1802, to the 31st of May 1803, both inclusive: and also a copy of a report of the Board of Directors thereon.—These documents were severally ordered to lie on the table, and at six o'clock the House adjourned till to-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, December 6.

[*MINUTES.*]—Mr. Graham, Inspector of Convicts on the river Thames, presented an account of the state of the hulks from Christmas to Michaelmas. Ordered to lie on the table.—Mr. Robinson, from the London Dock Company, presented an account of receipts and disbursements, from the 1st of June 1802 to the 31st of May 1803. Ordered to lie on the table.—Mr. Johnson from the office of the Chief Secretary in Ireland presented an account of the distribution of the sum of 500,000*l.* voted last session to the Directors of Inland Navigation in Ireland, and of the different sums granted to Grand Juries, which were ordered to lie on the table.—Sir F. Burdett brought up the Report of the Committee on the Petition of the Parish of St. Pancras, which was read and agreed to, and a bill ordered.—The Secretary at War appeared at the bar and stated, that he was commanded by his Majesty to acquaint the House, that his Majesty had caused Major-General Napper Christie Burton to be put under an arrest, for a breach of military discipline.—He then moved, that an humble address be presented to his Majesty, thanking his Majesty for his tender regard for the privileges of that House. Ordered.—Mr. Secretary Yorke moved, in pursuance of the order of the day, that the House should go into a Committee on the Irish Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill. The bill having gone through the committee,

the report was brought up, and ordered to be received to-morrow.—Mr. Secretary Yorke moved also, that the House do go into a Committee on the Irish Martial Law Bill. The House having accordingly resolved into the committee, and the clauses having been filled up, the report was brought up, and ordered to be received to-morrow.—The report of the Committee of Supply of yesterday on the Transport Service, &c. was brought up, and the resolutions read, and agreed to.—The Indemnity Bill, after a clause was received into it, on the motion of Mr. Corry, extending the provisions to Ireland, passed a Committee of the whole House, and the report was ordered to be received to-morrow morning.—The Irish Sugar Bounty Bill went through the same stage.—The Bill to prohibit Distillation from Oats in Ireland was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.—As also the Portugal Wine Bonding Duty Bill.—The Bank of England Restriction Bill was read a third time and past.—The Malt Duty Bill was read a second time, and ordered to be committed to a Committee of the whole House to-morrow morning.—The Irish Small Note Suspension Bill went through the same progress.—The Five Million Exchequer Loan Bill went also through the same progress.—The Irish Corn, Potatoes, and Provision Bills, in like manner, past the same stage.—As did also the Curates' Relief Bill, and the English Sugar Drawback Bill.

[*IRISH BANK RESTRICTION BILL.*]—Mr. Corry moved the order of the day for the second reading of the Irish Bank Restriction Bill; and on the motion that the bill be now read a second time,

Lord Archibald Hamilton rose. He said, he did not see any reason why the restriction of payments in specie should be continued either on the Bank of England or Ireland, to the protracted period of six months after the ratification of the preliminaries of peace. It must be obvious, his lordship thought, to every person, that the paper currency of Ireland was already carried to an alarming extent. It was his intention, he said, to move in the committee, that there should be a restriction of paper circulation in Ireland, and that the Directors of that Bank should be made responsible for the issues they should make.

Mr. Corry, in reply to the noble lord, admitted that it was, no doubt, a subject of regret, that the paper currency of Ireland was carried to such an extent. He was ready to admit this; but, at the same time, he thought the noble lord had better delay any motion

of that kind till a more advanced period of the session. Many of the members from Ireland were now absent, being engaged on account of the peculiarity of the times, and of the situation of their native country, in their military avocations. Their absence, from such ostensible and laudable motives, would be readily admitted by every man as highly to their honour. He had no objection that this subject should be brought before the House; but he thought it was only fair, that a discussion of this kind should not be entered into in the absence of those gentlemen, who were most concerned, and who were most likely to understand the subject. It was probable that, after the recess, many of the Irish members would be able to attend the House. The hon. Gentleman proposed, therefore, to refer the business till a distant period, when such gentlemen might be present, and when accounts might be produced for that purpose. The hon. gentleman also, he said, would be enabled by such a delay to make up his mind upon the subject.—He concluded by moving, that the bill be committed to a Committee of the whole House on Monday, the 13th of February.—Agreed to.

[*ORDER FOR COL. GRANT'S ATTENDANCE.*]—Colonel F. W. Grant, who, on account of his absence on the Waterford Committee, had been ordered to attend in his place to-morrow, rose, and expressed his regret that he had given any trouble to the House. He stated, that it had been his intention, notwithstanding his military avocations, to attend, if absolutely necessary, on his duties connected with that House. From corresponding, however, with a friend in London, he was led to understand, that election committees were necessarily dissolved at the termination of the session, and that consequently his attendance on the Waterford Committee was no longer necessary. The failure of duty of which he had been guilty had arisen from this misapprehension, and not from any intention to transgress the regulations of the House. The moment, he said, he had received the order of that House for his attendance, he had set out from Dundee, where his regiment was now stationed, and where it would be necessary for him to return immediately. His military duties were of an imperious nature. He relied, therefore, on the indulgence of the House, and hoped they would attribute his absence, not to any want of respect for the House, or to any tendency to neglect his duty, but to the misapprehensions he had already stated, and the imperious commands of military duty.

The Speaker stated, that it was usual in
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such cases for the House to say whether they were satisfied with the apology or not, and then either to discharge the gentleman from attendance on the committee, if satisfied; or, if not satisfied with the gentleman's apology, the House would order his attendance to-morrow, as formerly.

Mr. *Plumer* rose and moved, "that, in consequence of the hon. gentleman's apology, the order for his attendance to-morrow be discharged."—The motion was agreed to, and the order was discharged accordingly.—Colonel Grant returned his sincere thanks to the House for their indulgence.

[*EAST INDIA BONDS.*].—Lord *Castlereagh* moved the order of the day, for the House to resolve itself into a committee on the bill for regulating the rate of interest on the bonds issued by the East India Company. On the motion, that the Speaker do now leave the chair,

Mr. *Dent* rose, not to oppose the committee of the bill, but to call the attention of the House to the principal feature of it, which he considered rather extraordinary, as giving an indulgence to the East India Company, which he thought extremely partial, and one from which every individual and corporate body in this kingdom, was precluded. A few nights since, the hon. Secretary of the Treasury, in answer to a question put to him by an hon. member on his side of the House, respecting the tax on property and income, amongst other things had declared it to be the intention of government, to go through with the assessment of the tax, during the present year, in the manner prescribed by the existing bill. Now the present bill introduced by the noble lord, was calculated to effect, by a side-wind, an exemption of the bonds of the India Company from the law to which every other species of public stock was liable; and, consequently, to give those bonds a considerable advantage at market, over Exchequer Bills and every other species of stock; for the whole of the interest payable on Exchequer Bills, amounted to 5l. 6s. 3d. per cent. per ann. payable yearly, and he could see no reason why an exemption should be extended to India Bonds, which would give them a preference at market over Exchequer Bills, seeing that they engaged a preference by the interest thereon being paid half-yearly. At least, if such an exemption as this was given to the public funds of the India Company, with a privilege of borrowing at such an extraordinary advance of interest, he could see no right in precluding other corporations from a similar advantage.

Lord *Castlereagh* rose, and, in answer to that part of Mr. *Dent*'s speech which referred to the Income Tax, said, that the declaration of his hon. friend neither had, nor ought to have, any reference to the affairs of the East-India Company; and he trusted that the House would not consider, at the present crisis, that any regulations which his Majesty's ministers might deem necessary in assessing the Income Tax upon the property of individuals, ought to stand in the way of an important and necessary regulation, most materially interesting to the funds of a great commercial company, with the success of whose concerns the public revenues of this country were so deeply interested. He begged to call the attention of the House to the annual amount of the revenue paid to this country by the East-India Company, amounting, on an average, to £3,226,000 annually; and he trusted the House would feel too sensibly the importance of that concern which the country must have in the welfare of a company yielding such important aid to the state, to refuse, on light or trivial grounds, its assent to such regulations in the management of their funds and capital, as should be absolutely necessary to carry on their commercial concerns, under the present circumstances of the empire, without material disadvantage: for it was the province of the East-India Company, even under all the vicissitudes and disadvantages of war, to promote the commercial prosperity of the country in the most distant quarters of the globe; and this was not to be done unless they were enabled to keep a certain quantity of their funds afloat, and prevent them from returning back to their treasury, whereby their capital would be most materially diminished, and their means of trade consequently cramped. This could only be effected by enabling them so to regulate their rates of interest, as to maintain that respectability to their bonds, at market, which would prevent a decided preference of other funds, to the depreciation of theirs. The hon. member had said, that the bonds of the company stood in no need of such aid, for that they at present enjoyed an advantage at market over Exchequer Bills, on account of their interest, being payable half yearly. The fact, however, was otherwise; for Exchequer Bills were now at a premium of one shilling above par, whereas India Bonds were at a discount of two shillings. The noble lord then went generally into some financial statements of the company, in support of the bill: and contended that the increase of interest on their bonds was

necessary to give them currency abroad. He concluded by expressing a hope that the house would not refuse this indulgence to a great trading company, in whom the revenue and the state were so materially concerned.

Mr. *Johnson* said, the statement of the noble lord this night was in perfect consistency with the conduct adopted uniformly by him respecting the affairs of the company. In the last session, he amused the house with a pompous statement of the flourishing situation of their finances, and the brilliant prospects of their prosperity: but what is the first illustration the noble lord gives in this session? Why, a new plea of embarrassment, and a new appeal to the indulgence of the house, for the privilege of borrowing money, to answer their exigencies, at a much higher interest than any other corporate body, or individual in this country, dares venture to offer. Such was the conduct he should ever expect from the noble lord, so long as he presided over the conduct of India affairs; ever complaining of existing embarrassments, and ever holding out specious promises of future prosperity.

Mr. *Vansittart* said, that the present bill purported no more than a temporary relief to the India Company, from a species of embarrassment which in time of war must more or less affect all borrowers, public or private. The government of the country, at such time, always filled up its loans upon worse terms than were to be had in times of peace; and no company or individual could expect to be exempt from similar disadvantages: there was nothing, therefore, unreasonable, or unfair, in this mode of enabling the India Company to meet the terms upon which only their demands could be supplied.

Mr. *Charles Grant* said, the object of the bill was not to place the company in a better situation, but to prevent it from being placed in a worse situation. India bonds were coming in every day to be paid, and if the property-tax was to be deducted at the India-house in fractional parts, according to the number of weeks and days upon which it might be necessary to calculate, it would create endless confusion and embarrassment, and must tend to depreciate the bonds.

Mr. *William Dundas* also supported the bill; and denied there was any truth in the arguments of the hon. gent. opposite him (Mr. *Johnson*), that there was any proof in this bill of any embarrassment in the circumstances of the East India Company, or

any thing which could found a fair opinion against their prosperity.—After some further conversation, the question was put and carried, and the house having resolved itself into a committee upon the bill, went through the same, and it was ordered to be reported to-morrow.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, December 7.

Lord Hawkesbury presented the papers relative to the Convention entered into between Great Britain and Sweden, on the 25th July, which were laid upon the table.—The Seamen's Desertion Bill was read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.—The Bank Restriction Bill was brought up from the Commons, read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, December 7.

[MINUTES.]—Sir John Newport, returned by the Committee member for Waterford instead of Mr. Alcock, took the oaths and his seat.—A private petition was brought up respecting the widening of the Canterbury Road. Ordered to lie on the table.—Mr. C. L. Dundas brought up the report of the Waterford Committee, which stated, that the Committee had found the election of Mr. Alcock illegal and defective, and that consequently they had declared Sir John Newport the legal member.—Mr. C. L. Dundas also in pursuance of this report moved, that the Deputy Clerk of the Crown be ordered to attend to-morrow morning, in order to erase the name of Mr. Alcock, and alter the election. Ordered.—Mr. Sargent brought up the report of the Qualification Indemnity Bill. Ordered to be read a third time to-morrow.—Mr. Corry moved the order of the day for a Committee of the whole house on the Irish Sugar Drawback Bill. The alterations adopted by the Committee were purely verbal.—The House being resumed the report was ordered to be received to-morrow.—Mr. Corry moved the order of the day for the Irish Distillery Bill. It was read a second time, and ordered to be committed to-morrow.—Mr. Corry moved the order of the day for a Committee of the whole House on the Irish Promissory Note Bill. The House having resumed, the report was ordered to be received to-morrow.—Mr. Corry moved the order of the day for a Committee of the whole House on the Irish Provision Bill. The House have

ing resumed, the report was ordered to be received to-morrow.—Mr. Corry moved the order of the day for the second reading of the Irish Proclamation Indemnity Bill. It was read a second time accordingly, and ordered to be committed to-morrow.—Mr. Secretary Yorke brought up the report of the Irish Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill, which was ordered to be read a third time to-morrow.—Mr. Hobhouse brought up the report of the East-India Bonds Bill. Ordered to be read a third time to-morrow.—The Malt duty Bill was passed through a Committee, and was ordered to be reported to-morrow.—Mr. J. C. Beresford gave notice that he would to-morrow move for leave to bring in a bill to regulate the sale of corn in the city of Dublin.—Upon the motion for the committal of the Curate's Residence Bill, a few observations were made by different hon. Members, in the course of which the Chancellor of the Exchequer observed, that most probably all the bills which were in such a state of forwardness would be read a third time on Friday next.—The Curates Relief Bill passed through a Committee, and was ordered to be reported to-morrow.—Accounts were ordered to be laid before the house of the sums of money which have been issued to his Majesty by Parliament pursuant to addresses of the House, and which had not as yet been made good.—The Wine Bonding Bill was read a second time, and ordered to be committed to-morrow.—The Five Million Loan Bill, the Expiring Laws Bill, and the Sugar Drawback Bill, were committed, and ordered to be reported to-morrow.

[*IRISH MARTIAL LAW BILL.*]—Mr. *Hanthon* then brought up the report of the committee on the bill for continuing Martial Law in Ireland. The report being read,

Mr. *Wilberforce* said, it was not his intention to trouble the house with any long or minute discussion. With regard to the necessity of the measure now before the house, he believed there could be only one opinion. He rose, not to oppose the measure, nor to deny its necessity, for he was of opinion that such a measure was really necessary in the present circumstances of Ireland, and that it had been suggested by the imperious dictates of necessity alone. The only difference that existed between him and the framers of the bill, was in regard to the mode of carrying it into execution.—He did not wish to trouble the house, but he wished to propose some amendment in regard to the constitution of those courts martial to which the bill alluded. He thought, unless in a case of the most impe-

rious necessity, and suggested by the strongest reasons of expediency, no court martial ought to be permitted to sit in such instances which was not composed of seven members at least. If circumstances unhappily required the interference of such courts, it ought to be an object with the legislature to invest them with as much wisdom and deliberative justice as the nature of the case would possibly admit. The number constituting such courts, he thought, ought never to be more than thirteen, nor less than seven. There was not less danger from too many than from too few, in the determination of such cases as might come before them. The age of individuals composing those courts he thought also, ought to be particularly attended to. It was well known, that in the army there were many young men officers, who had not arrived at that age which the laws of the country have wisely fixed as necessary to enable a man to have the conduct of his own private affairs. And could it for a moment be thought prudent that we should entrust the lives of our fellow citizens to men whom the laws of the country had judged incompetent to the management of their own private affairs? He thought it was indispensably necessary that the legislature should provide that no minor, that no man under the legal age, should be permitted to sit in any such court martial. The measure, he allowed, was necessary; but it ought to be the care of that house to appear reluctant to deviate in any degree from the ordinary exercise of the laws: they ought to appear scrupulous in the adoption of any harsh or severe measure, and to remove as much as possible from its mode of execution the appearance of all harshness, injustice, or severity. This he thought might be done by the provisions which he wished to propose as an amendment. He could not conceive that these alterations would render the measure in any shape less effectual. Did he apprehend this as the consequence, he would be the last man to propose them. He knew, indeed, very well, that the government of Ireland would not wish to exercise any authority put into their hands, with greater severity than the urgency of circumstances might require. But while he was perfectly conscious of this, he at the same time wished, that the legislature should not trust to any individuals for the upright or lenient execution of any measure; but should prescribe to them their duty by the letter of the law.—What is the circumstance, the hon. gent. asked, that endears the trial by jury to every man of this country? Is not every member of that

jury liable to be reduced to the same circumstances of the person standing charged before him? Is there not a sympathy subsisting between the jurors and the persons whom they try—a sympathy that gives confidence to every man, that, if he has justice and equity on his side, it is the interest and congenial to the feelings of the jury to acquit him? In an ordinary court martial also, the officers composing that court martial were called to the trial of men of their own character and profession—men who had been similar to themselves, and to whose circumstances they were uncertain but they themselves might likewise, at some future period, be reduced. Here also there existed that sympathy and fellow feeling which operated in favour of the person to be tried. But the circumstances of a court martial trying criminals accused of rebellion were very different. The persons brought before them had different interests, and would seem to be almost of a different species. From the circumstances of a country in such a situation, they were too apt to meet their victims with anger and passion, which must ever be hostile to the deliberative measures either of justice or mercy. They feel too great an interest as a party to listen with that partiality which ought always to be extended to the unfortunate. If such would naturally be the case with almost all men in such circumstances, how much more ought the house to guard against the passions or prejudices of rash, unthinking, or unfeeling youth. In some instances he was aware the amendment he proposed to make might be attended with difficulty; but the lord-lieutenant, he thought, might in such instances have a discretionary power. In times such as the present we ought to place some confidence in the government, particularly in cases where the letter of the law could not with so much advantage be enforced.—The hon. gent. concluded with stating, that in his opinion such courts martial as the bill alluded to, should not consist of more than thirteen, nor less than seven, and that none under age should be admitted to sit in those courts.

The *Speaker* stated, that the object of the hon. gent. could only be obtained by moving a separate and distinct clause to be introduced into the bill.

Mr. *Wilberforce* accordingly made out the clause at the table, and read it to the house. On the question being put that the clause be brought up,

Colonel *Wood* said, he had no objection to the amendment proposed by the hon. gent., but rather than give any discretionary

power to the lord-lieutenant, he thought it would be more eligible to dispense with the number seven proposed by the hon. gent., and admit five as the smallest number that should constitute a court martial. He was inclined to be jealous in conceding discretionary powers to government that were not absolutely necessary.—The clause was brought up and read a first time. On the question being put, that it should be read a second time,

Mr. *Secretary Yorke* observed, that he could not agree entirely with the hon. gentleman who had proposed the amendment, though he was ready to give him full credit for the sincerity of his intentions. His great objection was, and he thought it must occur to every person, that his amendment was inconsistent with the original spirit of the measure proposed by the bill. The bill was of such a nature as could only be warranted by necessity. If there was no necessity for the measure, it would be better to discharge the bill entirely; but if the measure was thought necessary, which the hon. gent. fully admitted, such an amendment as he proposed would entirely defeat its object. Were it possible for regular courts to sit, or for legal juries to be assembled, there would be no occasion for such a measure; but neither regular courts nor legal juries could meet with safety to themselves in the present circumstances of the country, and it was for this reason only that the measure was brought forward. Was it possible, the right hon. gent. asked, that any court in the very heart of rebellion could previously go through any tedious process to ascertain the particular qualifications of its members, or would it be proper that every officer, in order to ascertain his age, should carry a certificate in his pocket?—The principle on which the hon. gent. proceeded would go entirely to prevent, in many instances, the assembling of any court together, and at times too when it might be most necessary. The right hon. secretary concluded by stating, that if the bill is at all necessary, it ought to pass as it is, and if not necessary it ought to be entirely dismissed; but the amendment, it was obvious, would go to defeat its object.

Mr. *Windham* thought, that no restrictions of the kind the amendment went to establish ought to be introduced in courts martial. If he were to state his objection to courts of this description, he would say that they were not so competent as others. But this objection referred entirely to that degree of judgment which men of such habits and pursuits were likely to exercise. The great

criterion to be sought for in courts, to which either the lives, the properties, or the privileges of men were to be tried, was judgment. But the hon. gentleman had not founded any of his reasons of amendment upon this broad and ostensible principle. He had objected to the general constitution of courts martial on the score of sympathy. It was not probable that any of those gentlemen composing a court martial would ever be reduced to the melancholy circumstances of those brought before them for trial. If this objection on the score of sympathy and feeling had any weight, it would militate equally against all courts martial. Did not courts martial try private soldiers as well as their brother officers, and would the hon. gent. say, that officers could have that sort of sympathy with private soldiers which he was disposed to derive from an idea of a probability of being involved in similar circumstances? The truth was, that here there was no such sympathy as the hon. gent. pleaded for; and would he or any other gentleman say, that that house ought to be more tender of the lives of rebels in Ireland, than of the lives of private soldiers who formed the strength and defence of the country? and yet the hon. gentleman's motion went to shew, that where we neglected the interests of the private soldier, we should be anxious to provide for the safety of rebellion. But the hon. gent. was apprehensive of the rashness and indiscriminating judgment of such officers as were under age. For his own part, if any want of feeling was to be apprehended, it was not, he thought, from young men warm with all the feelings, and all the sympathies of youth. If any such danger was to be apprehended, it was from men rather grown old in the prejudices and passions of a party; it was from men who had grown callous by long habits of severity. The right hon. gentleman concluded by saying, that in regard to the principle or necessity of the bill, he was not at present called upon to give his opinion. He could not say it was necessary, and he was not prepared to say that it was unnecessary. But at all events, if the bill was necessary, the amendment went in a great measure to defeat its object, and was besides founded on a principle that militated against courts martial of every description.

Mr. *Wilberforce*, in explanation, said, he did not mean to cast any reflection on the integrity of young officers; but he thought they wanted steadiness, and the right hon. gentleman confirmed the opinion, when he spoke of the warmth of their feelings. That

warmth may incline one way as much as another.

Dr. *Laurence* disapproved of the clause; the remedy was not such as should be applied. When the general measure was before the house, his object had been to render courts martial as like as possible to those under the mutiny act. The president, under that act, should be a field officer, and age and experience were secured by the rank. He did not see why the same regulation should not hold in the present instance, nor why the courts should not consist of the same number of officers as in all other parts of his Majesty's dominions, except two places, where circumstances did not permit it. The number of troops in Ireland afforded every facility, and it was the more necessary to have this tribunal liberally constituted, as it took the individuals out of the cognizance of the other courts. The objection of the hon. gentleman, on the score of passions, amounted to nothing more than the general evil of human infirmity; and if it was to be regarded, we could not have a judge or juror against whom objections could not be made. His objection was to the preamble, which took so wide a range, that robbing a hen-roost might be construed into an act of rebellion. The hon. gentleman had observed on a former night, that angels could not be trusted with arbitrary power; his present opinion went to say, that after twenty-one, it lost its corruptive nature.

Lord *Archibald Hamilton* said, there appeared to him to be two reasons held out for voting the present measure; one was, the late insurrection in Dublin. If the hope expressed in his Majesty's speech, and the address in answer to it, was to be relied on, it was a measure of precaution. Precaution against what? Was it against rebellion, against insurrection, against dissatisfaction in the people against the government? No. If he were to exercise his own understanding, he would say it was not a precaution against fear, or against danger, but against the confidence and hope expressed by his Majesty's ministers. Bearing in mind the sad and calamitous consequences which attended this measure when it first passed, he could not approve of the continuance of it; and he wished to give it this decided mark of his disapprobation. The question being put, the clause was negatived. On the question, that the bill be read a third time to-morrow,

Admiral *Berkeley* rose, not to oppose the bill, though his Majesty's ministers gave no satisfactory reason why it should pass, but to give notice that he should on an early

day, the earliest he could after the recess, move for the production of certain papers, which he hoped would clear away the imputation which, from something that had been said on a former night, now very unjustly rested on the character of the late commander in chief in Ireland (Gen. Fox).

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* called on the hon. admiral to state.

Admiral *Berkeley* said, he alluded to what the chancellor of the exchequer said, "that the commander in chief had early intelligence of the intended insurrection on the 23d July."

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* denied having used these words. A gentleman, who spoke in the early part of the debate on the night he alluded to (Mr. W. Elliott) having said, that no instructions had been given to the commander in chief, no communication made to the lord mayor; he had said, that instructions had been given to the lord mayor through the superintending magistrate, a police officer well known to the hon. gentleman. He took the earliest opportunity of declaring, that he had not the most distant idea of casting any imputation on the officer alluded to, nor had he heard, except from the hon. gentleman, that there was the smallest idea that any imputation was supposed to exist. He was sure, that whenever the conduct of the late commander in chief in Ireland, came to be considered, it would be found as free from blame, and as creditable to that deserving officer, as any other part of the conduct of the Irish government was, to the general credit which the conduct of that government had obtained.

Admiral *Berkeley*.—The right hon. gentleman has mistaken me. I did not mean to say, that I conceived any imputation against that meritorious officer from the words that he spoke: yet, I do think, they conveyed an aspersion. This hon. officer himself thinks so; nor is he the only person who does think so. The right hon. gentleman said, that early intelligence was sent to the commander in chief.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer*.—What I said was, that information had been sent, at an early hour, to the superintending magistrate.

Mr. *J. C. Beresford* observed, that to any gentleman acquainted with Dublin, it could not appear at all surprising, that the insurrection of the 23d of July should happen (even if such had been the case) without the knowledge of government or the commander in chief. It took place in the most obscure part of the city, proceeded only through three

streets, and was put down in one hour. He also observed, that the night was remarkably dark. From these circumstances, the hon. member inferred that this disturbance might have occurred without the knowledge of the civil government or the commander in chief; without attaching any blame to either, for neglect of duty or inattention.

Mr. *T. Grenville* not having before taken any part in the discussion of the measure before the house, he did not mean to oppose it in the stage to which it had arrived; nor should he have, on this occasion, troubled the house with any observations, if some expressions, which had fallen from the right hon. secretary, had not compelled him to do it, in order to exclude himself from that general conviction of the necessity of the measure which had been said to exist. He should not take up the time of the House, by entering into an inquiry whether the measure were necessary or not? but he would contend, that from the information which his Majesty's ministers had thought proper to give, no inference could be drawn of the existence of that necessity. When his right hon. friend (Mr. Windham), on the first introduction of the measure, had applied for a short delay, in order that information might be laid before the House, his application had been rejected on the ground that the smallest delay would be dangerous in the then existing circumstances. Though he was not in the house himself on that occasion, he was at the time fully sensible of the justice of the application, but whatever argument might have applied in that instance against delay, there could be none to apply in the present. The two bills now in their stages through the house, would not expire till six weeks after the commencement of the present session. The session had commenced on the 22d of November, and the bills would of course not expire till the 1st or 2d of January. He therefore, put it to the house, what possible argument could be used against a short delay, until such information should be communicated to the House, either by the report of an open or secret committee, as should justify the adoption of such strong measures. It had been more than once his lot to complain of the conduct of his Majesty's ministers, in bringing forward measures of great importance, without laying sufficient information before the house; and he took this opportunity of protesting against the manner in which the two bills before the house had been introduced. There was another circumstance too that should weigh with parliament, and which

materially affected the spirit of the constitution; he meant the operation of such a course of proceeding in the legislative union. Since the passing of that measure, it had become more than ever the duty of his Majesty's ministers to shew to the people of Ireland, that every measure involving their interests, not only claimed but received as much discussion and attention as it would, if their own legislature still continued to assemble. It was particularly their duty to avoid giving the slightest ground of suspicion, or suffering any one to fancy that the affairs of that country were not fully attended to. He did not mean to oppose the completion of the two bills before the house, though, if he were to follow the example of other gentlemen, in stating the ground of his private opinion, he should feel embarrassed, and considerable difficulty in making up his mind on the subject. The House had no documents to ascertain whether the measure were the wisest or most proper for Ireland; they had no official information whether the situation of that country was such as to require coercive measures; they had no ground on which to rest their proceedings, but the language of his Majesty's ministers, that language generally varying and always changing. He meant nothing ungracious to his Majesty's ministers individually, but, as a member of Parliament, he was bound to speak his sentiments openly, and say, he could have no confidence in their administration, neither in the wisdom of their measures, nor in the activity with which they executed them. The hon. gentleman entered here into a train of severe comments on the conduct of ministers, and on their incapacity. He then adverted to the manner in which the notice of his hon. friend (Admiral Berkeley) had been so quickly commented on by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He had expected that his hon. friend's observations would have met with very different reception. That challenge which ministers had on a former day given, when they deprecated a discussion by a side wind, they now had an opportunity of deciding by the proposition of the hon. admiral respecting his hon. relation; and the more the house investigated the conduct of ministers the more fully would they discharge their duty.

Mr. *Secretary Yorke* did not intend to follow the hon. member through the details of his speech, because nothing that had fallen from him appeared to him to require an answer. He was anxious, however, to say a few words, which he had not before an opportunity of doing, on the observations of

the hon. admiral. The hon. admiral had given notice of a motion for certain papers, in consequence of an aspersion which he conceived to be thrown on the character of an honourable relation. His right hon. friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had distinctly stated, in answer to the hon. admiral, that no such aspersion had been meant, either by himself, or any other member of government; and had correctly repeated the language he had used on the occasion. The right hon. Secretary here re-stated what the Chancellor of the Exchequer had before stated in explanation, and insisted that no direct nor implied aspersion was contained in the terms used. Whatever conduct the hon. admiral should think proper to observe, would be for himself to determine: but after what had passed, he must bring forward his motion, not in consequence of any aspersion on the hon. General, for whom he felt himself a very high respect as a meritorious and distinguished officer, but as a direct charge on his Majesty's government in Ireland, which he should be ready to meet. The right hon. Secretary wished also to state a few words, which he had omitted on a former day, in answer to an observation which had been made by an hon. gentleman (Mr. Elliott), by way of criticism, not of crimination, respecting the Lord Lieutenant's going to the park on the night of the 23d of July. The usual residence of the Lord Lieutenant was in the Park, whence he used to return every day about two o'clock to the Castle, to receive such information as might have been procured by the subordinate officers of the government. He had come to the Castle, on the 23d, and after receiving the information respecting the projected insurrection, had held a consultation on the expediency of his remaining in the Castle, the result of which was, that it was considered better for him to return to the Park, as the circumstance of removing his family to town might create considerable alarm. Every body who knew his lordship, would do him the justice to suppose that he would not leave Dublin from apprehension on such an occasion; nor was it probable that he should consider a serjeant's guard in the Park a better security than a garrison of 4,000 men in Dublin.

Mr. *Wyndham* thought, that as a charge might arise out of the statement that had been made, either against the Irish government, or the Commander in Chief, that the hon. admiral might, notwithstanding the explanation that had been given, bring forward his motion, though not for crimination, for the justification of his hon. rela-

tion.—The question was then put, and the bill ordered to be read a third time to-morrow.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, December 8.

Their lordships met pursuant to adjournment.—The English Bank Restriction Bill was read a second time, and ordered to be committed to-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, December 8.

[*MINUTES.*].—The Malt Duty Bill, the Irish Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill, the Irish Martial Law Bill, the East India Bonds Bill, and the Qualification Indemnity Bill, were severally read a third time, and passed.—The Pension Duty Bill, the Five Million Loan Bill, the Expiring Laws Bill, the Irish Corn Exportation Bill, the Irish and the British Sugar Drawback Bills, the Irish Silver Note Bill, the Curates' Relief Bill, and the Irish Oats Distillation Bill, were reported, and ordered to be read a third time to-morrow.—Lord Castlereagh stated at the bar, that his Majesty had been waited upon with the address of that House upon the subject of his most gracious communication respecting General Burton being taken into custody: and that his Majesty had been pleased to receive the address in the most gracious manner.—His lordship informed the House also, of the gracious reception of the address respecting the sums of money which that House had voted, and had yet to make good.—The Portugal Wine Bonding Bill had several new clauses added, the most prominent of which, was one extending the benefit of the act to the importers and proprietors of Spanish Wine. The report was ordered to be received to-morrow.—The Irish Inland Navigation Accounts were ordered to be printed.

[*NAVAL INQUIRY.*].—Sir *W. Elford* adverted to a motion which had been made by him during the last session of Parliament respecting the dismissal of a gentleman from his employment in his Majesty's dock-yards. He wished now to know, and he was happy to find that an hon. baronet was now in his place in that House, who might possibly have it in his power to inform him, whether it was the intention of the commissioners appointed under the authority of that house, to make any report upon the subject?

Sir *C. Pole* said, that in his opinion there

was not any such an idea at present among the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry.

Sir *W. Elford* then desired to be informed if it was not intended to mention the name of that gentleman, or make any observation whatever upon the subject to which he alluded?

Sir *C. Pole* then told the hon. baronet that most probably that gentleman's name might be mentioned, but he did not think it a circumstance by any means likely to occur, that any comment should be made upon the subject.

[*CURATES' RELIEF BILL.*].—On the Order being read for receiving the report of the Stipendiary Curates' Residence Bill.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* observed that, in consequence of the absence of his right hon. friend who had been the mover of that bill, he thought it would be most proper to postpone the consideration of that report for the present; and as he had no doubt that the House would immediately concur in that opinion, he should move that the report be taken into further consideration to-morrow. There would most probably be a good deal of business then before the house, but it could easily be further postponed till a more important discussion should happen to arise. The consideration of the report was then deferred till to-morrow.

[*SIERRA LEONA COMPANY.*].—Mr. *H. Thornton* presented a petition from the Sierra Leona Company, praying for pecuniary assistance from Parliament.

The *Speaker* observed, that he thought it his duty to inquire, before such a petition was entertained as the present, whether it had received the approbation of his Majesty, as it would, if the prayer should be finally agreed to, be voting away the public money to the use of individuals, which required that fact to be first ascertained.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* stated, that he thought there could be very little difference of opinion as to the probability, or even the certainty, of his Majesty's giving it a most gracious reception, as a petition for a grant of 10,000*l.* had at a former period received that sanction.

Mr. *H. Thornton* then moved, that the petition be referred to a committee to examine the matter therein contained.

Mr. *Dent* stated, that the report of the state of the company's funds, had been so very favourable, that in his opinion, that was, in itself, the very best reason that possibly could be against granting the prayer of a petition for parliamentary aid.—The question was then put, and the petition referred to a committee.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, December 9.

[MINUTES.]—Counsel were heard at considerable length for the Appellant, on the Appeal Cause from the Court of Chancery, *J. I. Keighly v. the East India Company*. After which their lordships deferred the farther hearing of the case till Tuesday.—Mr. Hobbouse accompanied by several Members, brought up the following bills from the Commons, viz., the Annual indemnity Bill, the Malt Tax, the Place and Pension Duty, the Sugar Bounties Drawback, the East India Bonds Duty, the Bank of Ireland Restriction, the Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill, and the Irish Martial Law Continuation Bills. They were severally read a first time; the two last-mentioned bills were, on the motion of lord Hawkesbury, ordered to be printed; his lordship at the same time gave notice of his intention to move for the second reading of those bills on Monday next.

[VOLUNTEERS.]—Earl *Darnley*, previous to the Order of the Day being read, wished to obtain some information on a subject confessedly of the highest importance; seeing the noble secretary of state in his place, he would take that opportunity. The subject, in his contemplation, was such as not only that house, but many thousands of his Majesty's subjects must regard with the utmost concern. He alluded to the volunteers, respecting whom he begged leave to ask, if it was the intention of his Majesty's ministers to propose any general regulations previous to the ensuing recess.

Lord *Hawkesbury* shortly replied, that he knew of no intention at present on the part of his Majesty's government, to propose any specific measure, previous to the recess, of the nature to which the noble earl alluded.

Earl *Darnley* resumed the topic; he by no means wished, he said, to pin the noble Secretary of State down to any particular time, for proposing such a measure as he had alluded to; he was fully aware, not only of the importance, but of the delicacy, of the subject. He repeated the anxious view in which it was very generally regarded. It was not his intention, however, then to go into any detail upon the subject, but there were one or two prominent points which struck him so forcibly, that he could not refrain from adverting to them, and endeavouring to press them on the attention of the noble Secretary as requiring the most serious consideration of his Majesty's ministers, and calling for adequate regulation. He first adverted to the con-

sideration of the way in which the services of several corps were originally accepted on the part of government, which certainly appeared to him to have been done on liberal principles, with respect to allowances, &c., but in regard to those he had to observe, that a system had been latterly acted upon, which appeared to him to be the reverse of the former conduct of government in that respect. The second consideration to which the noble earl principally adverted, and which he seemed to regard as one of extreme delicacy and importance, was the idea of the force in question, appearing in some points of view, as a species of military democracy. He thought it incumbent on him thus early to throw out those considerations, as meriting the most serious and anxious attention on the part of his Majesty's government. The noble earl also alluded to certain difficulties which had arisen under the present volunteer system, which he thought it would be important speedily to obviate; what he seemed principally to advert to, was the regulation of exemptions, &c.

Lord *Hawkesbury*, in the course of his reply, observed, that he should avoid at present, entering into any detailed view whatever of the subject. He agreed with the noble earl as to the great importance of the subject; it was one, therefore, which naturally attracted the serious attention of his Majesty's government; their lordships, however, would be at the same time aware of the complexity and intricate nature of the general subject, the variety of details which it embraced, and the correspondent difficulty of forming adequate regulations. He agreed also with the noble Earl, that certain difficulties had arisen in the progress of that system of measures, but of that nature as that they could not fairly be expected to be in the contemplation at the time, of those by whom under the circumstances of the case, the bill was originally framed. He repeated, that the subject certainly occupied the serious attention of his Majesty's ministers; but while he made this avowal, he wished to be understood as by no means committing himself with respect to the introduction of any specific measure upon the subject.

[BANK RESTRICTION BILL.]—The order of the day being read, their lordships resolved into a Committee on the Bank Restriction Bill, Lord *Walsingham* in the chair. The different clauses and provisions of the bill were regularly gone through, and approved by the Committee.—On the consideration of the Preamble of the Bill,

Lord King said, that if he had been present at the second reading of the bill, he should have thought it his duty to have urged, at some length, those arguments of justice and policy which struck his mind forcibly, as militating against the principle of the bill. The present not being the regular time for discussing the general principle, he should say very little on that part of the subject. He could not, however, avoid expressing his surprise, that a measure of this importance should be so much treated as a matter of course; that the bill should be read twice within two days after it had been sent from the other House, and that it should have been read for the second time without any previous notice, and without even the usual formality of a few introductory remarks from one of his Majesty's ministers. No inquiry was instituted; no reason was assigned for the passing of the bill, nor was any information laid before the House to prove the expediency of persevering in a system, which violated all general principles, and could only be justified by the most urgent necessity. Some very strong reasons ought surely to be assigned for continuing to a distant and indefinite period, a measure which had not been found necessary in former wars, nor at any period prior to the year 1797, when the restriction was first adopted. It was at that time acknowledged to be a measure of the most questionable nature, and open to the most dangerous abuses. It was now asserted by ministers, and the partisans of the Bank, that the privilege had not been abused, and that no public inconvenience had been experienced. His lordship thought that it was a great deal too much to take all this for granted, and that it ought, prior to a continuance of the measure, to be made the subject of inquiry. He was convinced, for his own part, that the contrary was the fact; and, though the abuse had not been flagrant or excessive, that the Bank had yielded, in a certain degree, to the temptation, and extended the quantity of their notes beyond the proper limits. By the present measure, the interest of the Bank was put in opposition to its duty; and in such a competition it was not difficult to conjecture which principle was likely to prevail among a commercial body. Whilst the measure was recent the Directors appeared to have conducted themselves with great prudence; but since the end of the year 1798, there was reason to believe, that they had uniformly, though in different degrees, been guilty of a breach of their trust. He proceeded to state shortly the principles upon

which this opinion was founded. An excessive multiplication of Bank Notes, so long as they cannot be exchanged for specie, had precisely the same effect as a debasement of the current coin; and as the bullion price of silver was the most accurate test of the purity of a coinage, it was the best standard of the degree of depreciation produced by an excessive paper currency. In ordinary circumstances the bullion price of silver seldom much exceeded the mint price, or 5s. 2d. per ounce, or if there was any occasional excess, it was not of long continuance. But, since the year 1798, it had *uniformly* exceeded that price, being at some periods (in 1800 and 1801) 5s. 11d. and 6s. At present it was 5s. 8d. being an excess of 9 per cent. above the mint price. He knew that there were other causes which might produce a temporary effect on the price of bullion; but he considered this uniform and unexampled increase of price, corresponding, as it did with the increase in quantity of Bank Notes and the depression of foreign exchanges, as affording a decisive evidence of misconduct in the Directors of the Bank. His lordship illustrated this position by a great variety of calculations and details. He said, that he should propose an amendment to the bill, calculated to give publicity to the proceedings of the Bank, which might operate as a salutary check upon the Directors. He proposed, that the Directors should be obliged to publish quarterly, in the London Gazette, during the period of the restriction, an account of the amount of their notes in circulation on the 25th of each of the three preceding months. By comparing the amount of the notes with the bullion price of silver, and the state of foreign exchange, the public would be enabled to judge at the time, whether the abuse was increasing to any pernicious extent. His lordship concluded by moving a clause in the Committee to this effect.

Lord Hawkesbury deemed it unnecessary to follow the noble lord, through the greatest part of what he had advanced, as being partly applicable to the principle of the bill, which was not then under discussion, and as partly foreign from the subject regularly under consideration; there existed, however, a great and an obvious necessity for the present measure: the bill proceeded on similar grounds with that of 1798, and at least an equal necessity existed for the Restriction now as then. The period of the present bill was somewhat different from that of the above year, and was in its nature more definite. He differed from the

noble Lord as to the causes assigned by him for the unfavourable state of the Exchange at different periods. He had some serious objections to the adoption of the regulation proposed by the noble lord; first there was no such provision deemed necessary in any of the former bills which had been enacted on the subject, though any reasons which might now apply for its adoption, obtained at former periods in equal force.—Secondly, as the Bank Directors had never, in the smallest degree, abused the discretionary power vested in them, they were, on the contrary, always most willing to come forward with every necessary information on the subject, and they never shrunk from any inquiry whatever. He additionally objected to the proposition, as it would tend (though perhaps such a thing might not be in the noble lord's contemplation) to reflect upon the Directors, a body who, so far from meriting any reflection upon their conduct, had uniformly discharged the trusts reposed in them with prudence, caution, and circumspection. However, the House would be aware, that in negating the motion of the noble Lord, neither he, nor any other peer, was precluded from coming forward at subsequent periods with motions for specific information upon the subject: and, indeed, such proceedings had taken place, in many instances, on the suggestions of members of both Houses of Parliament. On the whole, he deemed it his duty to oppose the noble lord's motion,

Lord King observed, in reply, that if he had not been fully understood by the noble lord, he had no difficulty in distinctly stating that he imputed blame to the Bank, and it was on this account that he had moved the amendment. He thought that the principle of publicity would be better secured, and the Bank Directors more effectually admonished of the importance of their trust, by a positive parliamentary enactment, than by leaving it to the discretion of any individual peer, who might choose to move for an account of their notes. He wished it to appear upon the face of the bill, that the danger of abuse was foreseen by the legislature, and guarded against by the only expedient of which the case would admit. With respect to the observation, that such a clause was unusual, and that it had not found a place in former bills, he would only say, that it was a principle which militated against all legislative improvements whatever. It was one of those general remarks which applied equally to every new proposition, and was, therefore, undeserving of attention upon any.

Lord Hawkesbury contended, that such a consideration was a reason against the adoption of the clause, inasmuch as the omission of the provision in the former bills, was productive of no injurious tendency whatever, nor of any ground of complaint. With respect to the unfavourable state of the course of Exchange at the periods alluded to, it was by no means to be attributed to the issue of paper from the Bank, but in a greater degree to the immense sums which were necessarily sent out of the country at the time for the payment of subsidies, and in consequence of the alarming scarcity which then prevailed.—The clause was negatived.—On the question being put respecting the third reading of the bill,

Lord Grenville expressed his opinion, without meaning in the least to resist the progress of the bill, that the passing of such a measure as the present should not be regarded as a matter of course in that House. He should have to offer a few observations, which he thought it incumbent on him to advance, on the occasion of the third reading, respecting the measure, and more especially on points of considerable importance connected with the subject of the bill. He should, therefore, propose that the bill be read a third time on Monday.—Adjourned till to-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, December 9th.

[MINUTES.]—The Speaker acquainted the House, that in obedience to the order of the House made on the 10th of August last, he had transmitted the Vote of Thanks of the House to the different Lords Lieutenant of Counties in Gt. Britain, and to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, to be by them communicated to the Officers and Privates of the different Corps in the respective parts of the United Empire; and that he had received through the Lords Lieutenant of Counties, and the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, answers expressive of the thanks of the different Corps for the notice which Parliament had been pleased to take of their zeal and exertion.—Mr. Forster, from the Exchequer, presented at the bar an account of the sums of money issued by his Majesty pursuant to addresses of the House which had not been made good by Parliament. Ordered to lie on the table.—Mr. Hobhouse brought up the report of the Portugal Wine Bonding Bill, which was received, and read a third time and passed.—The Malt Tax Bill, the 5,000,000l. Exchequer Bills Bill, the Ex-

piring Laws Bill, the Irish Provisions Bill, Irish Sugar Drawback Bill, English Sugar Drawback Bill, Irish Promissory Note Bill, Curates' Relief Bill, and Irish Oaths Distillation Bill, were read a third time, passed, and ordered to the Lords.—The London Dock Bill was read a second time, and referred to a Select Committee.—Mr. Secretary Yorke presented at the bar a return of the Volunteer and Yeomanry Corps, as far as the same could be made out, in compliance with an order of the House, dated the 10th of August. Ordered to lie on the Table, and to be printed.—Sir F. Burdett brought up the Pancras Overseer's Bill. Read a first time; ordered to be read a second time.—A new writ was ordered, on the motion of Mr. Sargent, for the election of a Burgess to serve in Parliament for the Borough of Westloe, in the room of Thomas Smith, Esq. who had accepted the Chiltern Hundreds.

[ARMY ESTIMATES.]—The *Secretary at War* (Mr. Bragge) moved the order of the day that the House do resolve itself into a Committee of Supply, and that the Estimates presented by him on a former day be referred thereto.—The House having accordingly resolved itself into a Committee, Mr. Hobhouse in the chair:

The *Secretary at War* rose, and observed, that notwithstanding the magnitude and importance of the subject to which the estimates now under consideration referred, he should not feel it necessary for him to take up much of the time of the Committee in adverting to the different items, or explaining the nature and grounds of the different estimates to which it was his duty to direct their attention. It would be altogether needless to dwell upon the particulars, because the estimates voted last session, comprehended nearly the whole of those now produced, and gentlemen having been familiar with the nature and extent of the former, it was the less incumbent on him to occupy much of their time in his statement and explanation of the latter. He was bound, however, to acquaint the Committee that the estimates now before them did not comprehend the whole military establishment of the year, because, from the nature and extent of the different services included in it, and the possible variation which might arise from a possible alteration of the circumstances and state of the country, the whole could not with accuracy be ascertained, so as to be produced to Parliament in the shape of an unquestionable document. He could assure them, nevertheless, that

whatever estimates were not, or could not, be laid before the house in the present instance, should be submitted to the consideration of Parliament at a more advanced period of the session, when they could be made up with sufficient accuracy. The estimates now before the Committee were classed under ten heads, namely—

	Numbers.	£.	s.	d.
1. Guards, Garrisons, &c.	129,039			
For Great Britain		3,115,456	9	9
For Ireland		1,161,168	2	11
Total		4,276,624	12	8
2. Forces in the Plantations, &c.	38,630	1,174,509	16	6
3. India Forces for Great Britain.	22,897	545,628	4	2
4. Troops and Companies for recruiting, do. for Great Britain.	533	29,859	14	9
5. Recruiting & Contingencies for Gt. Britain.		180,000	0	0
6. General and Staff Officers, with a state of the particulars of charges.		154,647	3	10
7. Embodied Militia and Fencible Infantry for Great Britain.	109,947	2,150,965	10	6
For Ireland.		640,657	17	0
Total		2,791,623	7	6
8. Clothing for ditto		215,793	14	6
9. Contingencies for ditto for England		50,000	0	0
For Ireland		11,129	7	0
Total		61,129	7	0
10. Volunteer Corps for Great Britain		730,000	0	0
For Ireland.		1,290,567	13	11
Total		2,020,567	13	11
For Great Britain	301,046	8,346,860	14	0
For Ireland.		3,103,523	0	10
Deduct for India Forces	22,897	545,628	4	2
Total for Great Britain	278,149	780,232	9	10
Grand Total		10,904,755	10	0

To each of these it would not be necessary for him to advert particularly; and he should, therefore, confine his observations to those items which, in exceeding the corresponding items in the estimates submitted last session to Parliament, seemed to claim a more minute explanation. The first item, therefore, to which he felt it his duty to call the attention of the Committee, related to the force proposed to be voted for guards

and garrisons in the United Kingdom. It would be in the recollection of the House, that the number voted for that service last session, partly in an early part of it, and partly in the month of June, amounted in the whole to 108,901 men. The force now proposed to be voted for that service amounted to 167,669, between which, and the number voted last year, the Committee would perceive there was a difference of 58,768. But the major part of that difference would be made up by the army of reserve, which amounted to 39,467 men. This force was distributed either in augmentation of the old battalions, or in forming eighteen second battalions of 1,000 men each, or in sixteen battalions of reserve, consisting of about 750 each. This statement would be sufficient to give the Committee a clear idea of the augmentation, which was proposed to be made to the regular military establishment. The Life Guards were to be augmented by 12,456, the twenty-four Regiments of Dragoons were to be augmented by a proportion, which, in the whole, would amount to 4,272 men; and the sixteen Regiments of Foot Guards were to have an augmentation, not exceeding 2,000 men in the whole, making an augmentation of about eighteen thousand. This was the only addition that was proposed to be now made to the regular army, with the exception of a small addition of 220 or 230 men to some of the old regiments of the line, and an inconsiderable addition that was to be made to some garrison battalion and fencible regiments, which would not in the whole amount to any material augmentation.—The next head to which it was his duty to call the attention of the Committee, was certainly a large one, he meant the general staff establishment. But when the situation of the country and the circumstances of the essential services rendered by that department, were considered, he trusted it would not appear excessive. The sum at which this service was estimated, was 154,647*l.* a sum though large, not extravagant, when it was recollected, that so many brigade officers were found necessary to train the volunteer force of the country. The embodied militia for G. Britain and Ireland amounted to 109,947. The Reserve Army of Ireland amounted to 9,970 men, of which 7,055 were to be attached to the old regiments by small additions of 220 and 230 to each battalion. The difference between that number and the whole force, he allowed, would volunteer into the line. The only addition proposed this year was about 1,827 to the dragoon guards on

that establishment. The only other head to which he found it necessary to advert particularly related to the Volunteers. He should consider them under two heads, first for G. Britain, next for Ireland. Any calculation under the head of G. Britain, would necessarily be loose and subject to much unavoidable inaccuracy, as it must necessarily depend on so many circumstances, and be regulated by the actual exigency of the country. He did not pretend, therefore, to submit an exact and accurate estimate of the expense under this head, though it was calculated as nearly as possible on the presumed extent to which the service of the year might require it to be carried. For the Volunteer Corps, he estimated that a sum of 730,000*l.* would be necessary, from the 25th of Dec. 1803, to the 25th of Dec. 1804; but it was here necessary for him to state, that as the clothing had been provided for in the expenditure for the present year, that item made no part of the estimate. The estimate had been calculated for the number to which the Volunteer Corps were supposed to amount, but by the account which had been this day presented to the house, it appeared that the actual number far exceeded the supposed strength of the volunteer force. By this account, it appeared, that the Volunteer Corps of G. Britain amounted to 379,943 men. The estimates of the expences of such a body, must necessarily be complex and difficult to be ascertained exactly, as the different rates of pay, according to the different periods of the year at which they came forward, should be taken into the account, as well as the nature of the service, whether permanent, or only for exercise, on which they may be employed. The sum, therefore, at which the estimate was taken, would not appear large, when it was recollected that the number for which it was calculated, was only 320,000. Of the Volunteer force 45,314 served without pay; 42,500 infantry, and 2,500 cavalry. Great part of the clothing had been voted in June, and therefore was not in the estimate: but the allowance of 1*s.* per day, for 20 days service, for the purpose of training, to such as should accept pay, was estimated at 190,000*l.*—Agency Officers, and Field Officers, in consequence of the alteration that in each respect had been found necessary in the original regulations, which had been made in June, required an additional expense, which did not, however, exceed 20,000*l.* This, he was aware, was a loose and rough estimate of the expense that would be necessary, but he was persuaded that it was rather under than over what the service would require.

With regard to Ireland, the state of that country required that the estimates should be higher than in proportion for G. Britain, as well to provide for services performed, as for those which may hereafter be necessary. The calculation of the numbers of the Volunteers raised in England was under the actual amount; but the estimate for Ireland exceeded the known amount, which was taken at 70,000 but presumed capable of being raised, if the situation of the country should require it, to 80,000*l*. There was also a considerable difference in the estimate for the two countries, which was unavoidably to be calculated in proportion to the time the volunteers should be called out on actual service. He supposed that the whole of the Irish volunteers would be out four months in the year.—But though the allowance under this head would be larger than the estimate for English corps, he thought, it right to state, that, except in case of invasion, when they should necessarily be employed on actual service, the Irish volunteers received no pay when merely out for exercising, nor when on duty, unless the men should be actually and efficiently present at muster on their parade. He had stated the present volunteer force of Ireland to be 70,000. The estimate, however, had been made, on a supposition that the number could, and would be considerably increased; and he had stated enough, he thought, to shew that the calculation was not excessive. He had now stated all additions proposed to be made to the estimates of last year. He had yet to observe, that there was no estimate respecting a part of the military establishment, which it had been usual to include in the Army Estimates; he meant the foreign corps employed in the service of this country, some of which had already been provided for; and others were now raising in different parts of Europe. The House, he trusted, would excuse him for not stating precisely the amount of the expence of this branch of the service, from the uncertainty of the extent to which it might be carried, and good policy would dictate the carrying it as far as circumstances would allow. Though he could not now lay before the committee the account, he should certainly do so after the recess, and particularly as his Majesty would have to resort to Parliament for the exercise of his prerogative. There was another branch of the military establishment which was usually submitted amongst the other estimates; he had it not in his power to lay before the committee in the present instance, and which he was the more induced to ad-

vert to from the question which had been put to him on the subject, on a former night by an hon. admiral, he alluded to the Barrack department. This department had been unavoidably, from the nature of the situation of the country, carried to a much greater extent than on any former occasion. The expence, however, was not so much incurred for regular barracks, as in providing winter cantonments for the forces on the coast. It was impossible yet to procure such returns as would enable him to lay an accurate estimate before the House, and he was convinced, that the expence would not be deemed improperly incurred, when the house would be aware, that the whole effective force of the country was at present covered by barracks. He should use all possible diligence in making out the account, and though he was not competent at present to bring it forward, he was prepared to give any gentleman who might be desirous of information on the subject, every satisfaction in his power, either with respect to the department itself, or to the contracts which had been entered into respecting it, or any other point to which enquiry might be directed. He should be sorry that forms should preclude any gentleman from seeking information, and he would be happy to communicate any in his power. He had now stated the grounds upon which he should move a vote of the Estimates, which was a subject intimately connected with the most important interests of the empire. He trusted the house would be sensible of the advantage of improving, by every possible means, the disposition which prevailed in the country. Not only the parliament had called for the exertion of every energy of the country, but the people had manifested an eagerness in the cause, and a desire to employ every energy they possessed, even before they were called. He had thought it his duty thus to state in a plain manner, and he hoped he had succeeded in making himself clearly understood, the nature of the Estimates which he proposed to move. He should now, therefore, move, the first resolution.—On the question being put,

Mr. *Windham* began by adverting to the manner in which the business had been opened by the hon. Secretary, which, he said, though very proper at any ordinary time, and though possibly very proper then, was so different from the view which he felt himself compelled to take of the subject, that his observation, he feared, would appear very little to arise out of the statements which the house had just heard. His view of the subject went to the general de-

fence of the country both present and to come. Under that notion, the difficulty was to know where to begin, or how to confine the discussion within such bounds as he should wish to prescribe to it. It was impossible, in the course of such an inquiry, not to bring forward many points that must bear hard upon the hon. gent. opposite. He could not arraign the measures of the time without arraigning the conduct of those by whom these measures were planned; nor could he suffer his mind to be so engrossed and absorbed, as seemed to be the case with many, by the mere business of defence, as to lose all thought about the conduct and character of those to whom the national affairs were entrusted. This, though in some respects, a secondary consideration, inasmuch as it must be founded on proofs to be derived from an examination of their conduct, was, nevertheless, a very important and unnecessary one, was connected with every part of the subject, and might serve, perhaps, as well as any that could be chosen, to present the subject in that point of view, in which it was most important to consider it. His own general opinion on this head, he could not better describe, than in some lines which gentlemen might have seen on Inn windows and shutters, where the writer, speaking of the faults of men and women, and allowing that many faults belong to men, concludes, most injuriously and ungallantly,

—Poor women have but two;
There's nothing good they say, and nothing
right they do.

These lines, however bad the poetry, and however false the sentiment, in its original application, were, he was sorry to say, perfectly descriptive of his opinion of his Majesty's present ministers. That he might not seem to say this at random, without foundation or proof, he would beg only to take a short view of their conduct, as applicable to the actual state of things. If he were to proceed strictly in this inquiry, though by no means unjustly, he should take up their conduct from the moment of the Treaty of Amiens. It was from that period, according to the opinion of many at the time, according to their own opinion, as declared since, that measures of precaution and defence ought to have begun. They who had declared, that from the moment of the signature of that treaty, the conduct of the enemy was a continued series of *violence, insult, and aggression*; they whose partisans had told us, that he must be 'nature's fool,' and not the hon. gentleman's, who could ever believe in the durability of that treaty;

they certainly could refuse to accept the Treaty of Amiens, as the period from which the defence of the country ought to have been a subject never absent from their minds. But as he did not wish to deal hardly with the hon. gentlemen, as it would be mean and niggardly to be sparing of concessions where the materials of charge existed in such abundance, he would be content to date his examination from a much more recent period, and to leave out all the intervening space between the Treaty of Amiens, and the 8th of March, the day on which his Majesty's message was brought to Parliament. He would suppose it to have been perfectly right, that from the moment peace was made, no matter with what circumstances, you were to proceed according to the established rule in such cases, were to reduce your army, dismantle your fleet, dispose of all your stock and implements of war, sell off gun-boats for little more than the value of the old iron, refuse for five guineas men whom you would be happy now to get back for fifty; discharge others, whom you could not get back at all. All this he would conclude to be right, and that, without the observance of these accustomed forms, ministers would never have been able to persuade the country, or to satisfy themselves, that the peace which they had made was a real peace, and not a mere make-believe. He would consider their conduct only during the period subsequent to the 8th of March. The establishments of the country were then happily brought to the standard at which it was proposed they should remain; all the reductions had been completed; no subsequent alteration had taken place; a vote in parliament might have passed, but nothing more: all the means of defence were as much to be re-collected as if the country had never been at war. Giving ministers full credit for the completely defenceless state in which the country then was, he would proceed to consider, what the change was which they had since effected, and what the means which they had possessed for that purpose; so that by a comparison of the means possessed, and the work done, a judgment might be formed as to the degree of blame or merit ascribable to their conduct. And here he would wish to adopt a method, such as was often employed on other subjects, where, when the *quantum* of objects could not be ascertained with exactness, means were resorted to for assigning at least a *maximum* or *minimum*. He had heard, where in the case of exorbitant election charges, in a bill for cockades

for instance, the candidate had offered to pay for all the ribands that could be proved to have been in the shop for the last six months; or where the charge was for liquor, instead of attempting to calculate the number of drinkers, and the average quantity they might severally have drank, he had proposed not only to pay for all that had been in the cellar within a certain time, but to *guage the house*, and to give credit for all that could have been contained in it, supposing it to have been one entire cistern of liquor from the cellar to the garret. He would pursue a course somewhat similar in estimating the merit of the exertions of the hon. gentlemen. Instead of saying 'so much ought to have been done in recruiting, so much in completing the militia, so much in procuring defence in other ways,' he would rather beg the House to take a general view of the means possessed by the country, of the manner in which ministers had the disposal of these means, of the time they have had to employ them, and comparing the whole with the result, to determine in their own minds, whether the affairs of the country, in this most critical concern of its defence, had or had not been placed in proper hands. Let the several heads of comparison, as he had enumerated them, be considered more in detail. The means of the country, in its first and greatest article, the basis of all the rest, was a population of fifteen millions: the time, as he had agreed to take it, from the 8th of March, was nine months, three quarters of a year. The wealth of the country was, he must confidently say, for this purpose unlimited. There was nothing that the country was not willing to do in the way of personal service, or to contribute in the way of money. It was long, indeed, before the hon. gent. thought fit to call upon them. Whether it was that they feared to alarm the holders of omnium, according to their own original account, or whether they distrusted the zeal of the country according to the explanation given of their intentions, in their second edition, when they had had the assistance of a learned commentator (Mr. Sheridan); which ever of these was the case with respect to them, the result of the fact was; that the country was no sooner told of its danger, and summoned to rouse in its defence, than it obeyed the call with an alacrity which the hon. gentlemen have since confessed themselves to have been unprepared for. 'They did not call spirits from the vasty deep,' which refused to answer to their bidding. On the contrary, the hon. gent. had no

sooner began to *try* for this zeal, had hardly begun to sink this well, before the national feeling rose so fast upon them, that they found themselves in danger of being overwhelmed by it, and begged for God's sake to be pulled up again. They no sooner turned this cock than it spurted in their faces. They had nothing to plead, therefore, on the score, that the country did not second their efforts, that it withheld its assistance, that it kept back its milk, as it were: the country was ready to yield its resources to any amount for which they would have declared it necessary to call for them. So far as to the means which they *possessed*: but were the means *employed* inconsiderable, or not abundantly sufficient to prove the improvident management of those who had the administration of them? The money expended for the army of reserve alone, and that too in mere bounties, could not be estimated at less than 1,000,000*l.* For the volunteers, the hon. gent. had just said, that the estimate for the ensuing year must be 700,000*l.*; and, therefore, for the year now closed, in which, if some articles were less, others were considerably greater, could not he conceived, be less than 1,000,000*l.* This, as the sum advanced by government to that object; to which, if he was to add, as undoubtedly he must add, the part contributed by individuals, he certainly should be within the mark, when he stated the whole expense incurred for volunteers at not less than 2,000,000*l.* Here then was a sum of at least 3,000,000*l.* expended in little more than the mere *creation* of a force; and that in a way, for the greater part of it, infinitely more oppressive than if raised by a general tax. What then, they were to ask, was the force *created*? And upon this occasion the statement of the hon. gent. had something very grand and imposing, perfectly in the stile of many statements, which were heard in that house. The safety of the country was provided for, it might be said, by a vast mass of armed force amounting to not less than 500,000 men. He was far from sure that the numbers might not even exceed these limits. But, of course, it was not to be supposed, that they were to take this statement merely as it stood in words, without inquiring a little, what this mass, this fabrick consisted of: how much of it was of solid masonry, part of the whole standing force of the country; how much was of a later date and less regular construction; how much might be composed of materials still more recently collected, and more hastily put together, and be liable, in consequence, to various cracks

and settlements; and what portion of it was mere lath and plaster, not distinguishable, perhaps, by the eye, and seeming to be a continuation of the same front, but no more the same with it, in reality, than one of the new temporary barracks, of which they might expect to hear so much soon, was to be considered as a building of the same sort with St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey. It would be found, upon examination, and when this great building came to be regularly surveyed, that a very small part indeed, was regular army; that a large portion of it was militia; that another less considerable part was army of reserve; but that three-fourths of the whole was the mere levy in mass, moulded into the form, and known under the title, of volunteer corps. This is not what would have been understood, at least without explanation, in a report of the force of France, or Austria, or Prussia, or any other military power. Of the two first descriptions of force here enumerated, it was not necessary to say much. The regular army was what they had always known the regular army to be, and never more, than during the whole of the period of the late war. The militia had long been wrought to a high degree of excellence, and was at that time, perhaps, in as great perfection as it was possible for troops to attain, of whom neither officers nor men could have had the benefit of actual service. Of the army of reserve the character must be for some time continually changing, according to their progress in training, and according to the manner in which the men were disposed of, either as selected, and incorporated into old battalions; making, however, a very incommensurable mixture of men serving upon different tenures; or as put together in battalions by themselves. But in neither way could they be considered, for some time at least, as fit to be classed with the regular troops; nor would it be possible at any time for those so to class them, who refused to admit to the description of a soldier, any man whose engagement of service did not extend to term of life. It would be curious indeed, if those who resisted most pertinaciously, and at the hazard even of having no army, every attempt to change the service of the line from life to term of years, should now find out that soldiers serving both for term of years, and for service within the realm only, were entitled to reckon as part of the regular army. But a great portion of these were, for the present good for no service either without or within the realm. They were men newly collected

together with their pockets full of money, or who had only emptied them by a continued course of intoxication, and had not yet got their grass flesh off, had not got the beer out of their bellies, which they had been swilling for weeks, many of them at the rate of 50 guineas a man. As for those who were left behind in what were called the reserved battalions, they, for the most part, were so left behind and reserved, because no one thought it worth his while to take them, and were of a sort which no time or drilling could ever render serviceable; time indeed, being with many of them the last thing they wanted, as the very objection to be urged, was, that they were already past the age of service. The last and most important, certainly the most extensive head of force, was that which comprised the great body of inhabitants to whom arms had been given or promised, the general collection of the volunteer corps. In speaking of these bodies, it was as well perhaps to attempt, though he knew the attempt must be vain, to obviate the misrepresentation, which he was aware, was lying in wait to seize upon every word he should say,

(Hush'd in grim repose expects his evening prey,)

by observing, that what he had to condemn in these institutions was not the individuals, but the system. That in speaking of a body of 400,000 men, he certainly did not mean to say that they were all useless, or worthless, or of a character he knew not what, that was to make them run away at the sight of an enemy. He certainly should not be inclined to say this of any 400,000 men, taken at random from among the inhabitants of this country, and must necessarily be less inclined to say so, of a body which from the manner of its being combined, must contain a greater proportion of the zeal, spirit, and patriotism of the country, than any other of equal numbers taken without rule or selection. To impute, therefore, to any one a purpose of censuring the volunteers individually was too childish to be deserving of notice. As little could he intend to say, that the body of volunteers as at present constituted, were of no use: 400,000 men with arms in their hands, and consisting for the most part of persons within certain ages, could not be so combined, as not to be capable of being useful. All that he meant to say was, that these corps must be for ever unsuited to the sort of service on which it was intended to employ them; and that the methods pursued with them were calculated to render

them as little useful as it was possible for such an assemblage of men to be. The idea was, as had been long foreseen, and long deprecated, to combine these into companies, regiments, and brigades, and to endeavour to make regular soldiers of them. He was of opinion that you never could make regular soldiers of them; and that the attempt to do so was founded in every respect upon false views, both of the nature of those corps and of the military service in general. He grounded this opinion upon circumstances, certainly having nothing injurious in them to the character of persons acting in volunteer corps. It was no reproach to any one, that he was of an age, or size, or state of health, that did not admit of his performing the duties of a soldier; that he was the father of a family, and could not be spared from the care and superintendence of those who looked to him at every moment as their protector and guide; that he was engaged in a business which he could not leave without ruin, and without ruin to those who depended on him for their support. There was no reproach in all this; but there was a great deal in it, which must prevent corps, consisting for the most part of men so circumstanced, from either performing for any length of time the duties of soldiers employed on service, or from acquiring the expertness and habits by which those duties must be performed. These were truths which would not probably, be much disputed. All the world would agree, that to talk of giving to citizens and householders, ('to resident inhabitants paying scot and lot') to men engaged in professions and callings, who were compelled to live on one spot, were tied down by the care of families, who rejected military controul, were serving without pay, were officered in a great measure by persons of their own description if not of their own choosing,—that to talk of giving to such men the character and qualities of regular soldiers, was the greatest of all absurdities. Yet this which every one would agree in, which no one would be hardy enough to deny, was the utmost that had ever been said, in disparagement, as it was called, of the volunteers. All the rest was a mere military question, by which the volunteers were not at all affected. Once admit that collections of men such as he had just described, were not capable of being formed into regular regiments, that is to say, regiments possessing the properties which were looked for in troops of the line, and it then became a question, to be decided on general military principles, and in which the volunteers were

no longer concerned, how far corps of a certain acknowledged inferiority ought to be employed in certain services, or to be placed in certain situations. And here a great mistake seemed to prevail of supposing, that whatever possessed in itself a certain degree of force or strength, must by its addition to any thing of the same description, produce a degree of force more than would be found in either of the parts separately; that strength added to strength would always produce strength. But this was evidently not so. If the addition supposed was not judiciously made, weakness, instead of strength, might be the consequence. No one could doubt that a regiment of four or five hundred men, volunteers or others, must possess some power of annoying an enemy. But was it sure that your line would be strengthened, and your general power of annoying and defeating the enemy be increased by such addition. He would take an example from a profession with which the House and he were, in general, probably less acquainted than they were even with military affairs, but which might happen to be more familiar to them in this particular view. What was the reason that in naval actions, frigates and even fifty gun ships were not suffered to make part of the line? Was it, that fifty gun ships, or even frigates were of no force? That their balls did not hit hard? That some of their guns were not even heavier than a part of those which formed the battery of a ship of the line? By no means. It was, he must conclude, because a line of battle at sea was a species of machine, so constructed, as to require a certain proportionate strength in all its parts, the failure of any one of which would draw after it the failure of all the rest. The same was the case with an army. *There* also was a line, and which, as might be collected from the very expression of 'regiments of the line,' could be formed only of troops trained to a certain degree of discipline and regularity. To form it otherwise, to put into the line corps which, from want of experience or instruction, might not maintain the part of the action allotted to them, would not only be to endanger the whole by that particular failure, but might in a thousand other ways, embarrass the operations of an army, and defeat the plans of a commander. *Manœuvres* must be calculated upon supposed qualifications in the troops and officers, who are to execute them. What must be the situation of a general, if when directing the execution of any pressing service—a hill, suppose, to be occupied, a post to be main-

tained, a wood to be defended, a redoubt to be stormed—in a crisis which left no leisure for deliberation or inquiry, he must be comparing the characters of the different corps under his command, and be exposed, at last, to the uncertainties of troops, whose composition was unknown, whose conduct in a day of action was to be tried for the first time, and who, in the mode of service now proposed for them, might involve in their defeat or discomfiture, the discomfiture of the whole army. These were not objections to volunteers in general; so far from it, that he, on the contrary, had always contended for them, to a far greater extent, though on a far less expensive footing than that on which they were now established. His objections went only to volunteers, moulded into the forms, and destined for the sort of service which government had now assigned them. It was government which had given them this most false direction; which by dressing them in red coats had betrayed, at once, the character in which they meant to consider them, and the use they meant to put them to,—a use for which they could never be made fit. This was the point on which he wished to insist. Other objections to the present system he should not now dwell upon; nor consider what might be the future danger arising to the state from bodies of armed men, subject to no regular authority, governed by committees and sub-committees, and having more the character of debating societies than of schools of military discipline. He was considering them merely as part of the defence of the country against a foreign enemy, and in this view he must recall to the attention of the House: first, the immense reduction to be made in our force, when, out of *five* or *six* hundred thousand, *four* were understood not to be soldiers, but only armed inhabitants; and next, when these armed inhabitants were prepared and fashioned in a manner so little judicious, as in the plan now pursued. When to this was added, that by the exemptions given, contrary to the intentions of ministry, and by the mere effect of haste and oversight, numbers had latterly flocked into these corps, as a refuge from other service, and that so large a portion of the active population of the country was thereby locked up, and withdrawn from the service either of the army of reserve or militia, (the regular recruiting was out of the question); he would leave to the House to judge what credit was to be given to the hon. gentlemen on this head of the account. The

whole return, the whole force produced by the hon. gentlemen, after three millions expended, and with the command of an unlimited credit, was 1st. 400,000 volunteers, such as he had described, and whose formation operated, as he had described, in respect to the other services; 2dly, a militia excellent in its kind, but incomplete, and rendered more difficult to be completed by the effect of the measure above referred to; 3dly, twenty, or six and twenty thousand army of reserve; and 4thly and lastly, an addition, (as he should have said) of 5,000, or (as he now understood from the hon. gentlemen) of 7,000 men to the regular army! This was all that the hon. gentlemen had produced at the end of nine months, and as the fruit of all their labour and travail. This was all that the nation had got, in return for its large contributions, its ready sacrifices, its heavy expense, both of patience and money. Five thousand men to the regular army, five pints of reasonably good soup, was the whole that these state-cooks had been able to produce after all their simmerings and boilings, all the hams and chickens, and pounds of beef, which they had melted down, and the bills which they had run up in consequence at the different shops.—Thus far he had gone in considering what a great philosopher of old would have called the *living* instruments of our defence. The *inanimate* instruments must not be overlooked, though he should say but little to all the objects which that class would comprize, such as works, fortresses, preparations by sea and land, every thing that wisdom and foresight could provide or could arrange, towards making the approach of an enemy difficult, or giving force and efficacy to the action of those who were preparing to resist him. In all this, he feared a dreadful deficiency. Much as might be wanting in living means, the want of judgment and ability in the application of those means, the want of a presiding mind either to create resources, or to turn to account those already existing, he feared was not less considerable. He would not attempt to enter into a criticism either upon the general distribution of the forces, which so far as it was built upon a system of concentration, or of collecting the force into great masses for the protection of vital parts, he certainly approved, nor would he offer any opinion as to the considerable works going on at Chelmsford and Chatham, having, in fact, no opinion to offer. He would touch upon one point only of that sort, and that not so much with a view of stating what he thought

ought to be done, as of remarking on what *was* done, and upon the dreadful weakness and inconclusiveness of many of those reasonings, which governed the conduct of the country, in points where its very existence was at stake. From the northernmost point on the coast of Suffolk, where the protection might be supposed to cease from the shipping at Yarmouth, to a part of the coast of Essex, where a naval defence of another kind might be supposed to begin; (and where he hoped it had at length begun, though, very late in the year it certainly had not made its appearance), there was a line of coast accessible in most weathers, and certainly very commodious for the landing of an enemy in such vessels as those in which they were expected to come. Upon this line he should unquestionably think it highly advantageous if a defence were provided, formed by the construction of what were known to our officers under the name of Martello Towers, a species of edifice so called from a memorable instance of one at Martello in Corsica: where by a tower of this sort, garrisoned by some ten or half dozen men; and mounted with about two guns, a ship of the line of ours and a frigate, were, during the last war, completely foiled and driven off, though they were able to approach within a quarter of a mile of the object, and though the captain, a most approved officer, would not withdraw from the contest while there was a hope left, nor till he had lost an immense number of his men, and had had his ship twice set on fire. No one would pretend to say, that towers of this sort would not produce a great effect upon an enemy whoever he might be, that came within the reach of their guns. That they would stop the disembarkation of infantry, he was not prepared to say. On the contrary, he was of opinion that they would not. Great as the loss might be, the enemy if determined, would still accomplish his object. But would the same be the case with artillery and horses? And would not the slaughter be immense, and the delay most important, were it possible, that under such a fire, a disembarkation of that sort could, after all, take place: The objection therefore, to such defences must resolve itself into the consideration of expense, or into that of the force which it would lock up, and the means which would be furnished to the enemy, should the fortresses in question finally fall into his hands. As to the latter objection, he had clearly stated, what the contents of such towers were, and what the loss would be to those from whom they should be taken, viz., a dozen men at the utmost, and a cou-

ple of guns. The value to the enemy would be none; for the guns would never be transportable; and certainly not the towers; and neither would be of any use to him where they were. But their uselessness to the enemy it was unnecessary to prove, as it was hardly possible that they should fall into his hands. It was of the nature of these small fortresses (quite the reverse of what was the case with redoubts) that they were equally impregnable to cannon and to musquetry, and could not be taken but by such means as the enemy would neither have time nor inclination to employ. The whole question, therefore, was a question of expense; and what would that expense be, incurred once for all, compared with the maintenance of such a living force, (supposing even that we had the force and could spare it for that purpose,) as would give to any tract of coast the same security which would be derived from the defence in question? Considering the simplicity of the construction of these towers, the little interior fitting they would require, the rude materials of which they might be composed, (the stones made use of for paving London, might serve for the most expensive part,) the facility with which materials would be conveyed for buildings necessarily situated on the edge of the coast and in its most accessible parts, it is difficult to conceive, that 1,000*l.* a piece must not be an ample allowance. And thus for a sum of 30,000*l.*, and with a force of 300 men, thirty miles of coast, in parts the most vulnerable, would be put in a state of security far greater at least than any which they could enjoy without the aid of such precautionary measures. But let the House consider what happened without this. To supply the place of these despised towers, the coast was lined with sea fencibles armed with pikes, a weapon which had been said, if he recollected right, in some of the circular official papers, to be capable of great effect in the hands of a Briton fighting for every thing that was dear to him. He wished the House to reflect what would be the situation of these pikemen at Aldborough for instance, one of the places, where there was a corps of that sort, and which was situated on the part of the coast to which he had been alluding. Here was a straight shore with deep water, and a beach, on which in moderate weather vessels might run with confidence without even shortening sail; and in these circumstances it was supposed, that when vessels should thus arrive, containing each a hundred soldiers, and carrying a four-and-twenty pounder on its bow, men were to stand on the shore with their pikes,

and push them off! Was this the idea of a bold Briton? or was it the idea of master Fribble? "Begone, fellow." You might as well suppose that the enemy was to be kept off by bodkins or knitting-needles. It was certainly not by a force of this sort, that the coast could be defended. The great argument, indeed, was, that it could not be defended at all, and that, therefore, no defence should be attempted. And here he wished to recall the attention of the House to that sort of loose, vague, inconsiderate style of reasoning, to which he had before alluded, and to which, it was melancholy to think, the very life and being of the state was sometimes entrusted. When a proposal was made for securing a part of the coast by works, as happened in the case of an hon. friend behind him (Colonel Craufurd) the answer universally made was, that you could not fortify *every* part of the coast; and thence it was meant to be inferred, that it was useless to fortify *any*. But what was the sort of reasoning that could lead to this as a conclusion; In many cases, he was ready to allow, that an argument to that effect would be just. If the question was of shutting mice out of a pantry, the conclusion would be correct, that to stop up one hole was useless, while any other was suffered to remain open. The strength of a chain, according to an old observation, was the strength of the weakest link. To fortify those above it was useless; to add to the strength of those below it might be injurious as well as useless; because, without adding to the general strength, you might add something to the weight. But were any one to apply that same reasoning to a chain in a figurative sense, to a chain of posts, nothing could be more false and inconclusive. It is not here as in the other case, that the force applied acted through every part. The force acted only on the part to which it was applied; and if that part happened to be the strongest, would be resisted with the power of the strongest. It was true, that if the enemy knew your weak point, and could be sure of carrying his attack there, all that he was arguing against, must be admitted. But would any one maintain, that such was the fact? Was this what they heard on other occasions? When the danger of invasion was in discussion, how were those laughed to scorn, who seemed to reason upon the idea, that the enemy, once embarked, could say, either where he should, or where he should not, touch the land! How much of our confidence was founded, and justly founded, on the uncertainty which belongs to all the enemy's operations, and in the impossibility of his fixing with certainty

the point in which his descent must be made? Yet here the tables were suddenly turned; and to attempt to secure any part of the coast, while another was left unguarded, was treated as trifling and childish; because the enemy would be sure to chuse what was weakest, and must be able to guide his armament with perfect precision to the part, whatever it was that he should chuse. He urged this topic, with a view to expose the sort of reasoning which was admitted often into concerns of the greatest importance, and might prevail possibly at the present moment in questions more critical and more certain, than that which he had brought forward respecting the coast of Suffolk. There was, in fact, no security any where with persons so wholly unsuited to the arduous crisis in which they had to act, as the hon. gentlemen. In every part of their system little considerations were mixing themselves with great, so as to spoil the effect of the whole, and prevent its working truly in any of its operations. This was eminently the case in the pecuniary part, where a wild profusion was so combined with a mean parsimony, that it was like the conduct of a man, who in giving a great entertainment with all the dainties of the season, peas at a guinea a quart, should disgrace the whole by a scarcity of clean glasses, or by a coarse and ill-washed tablecloth. With this must be coupled, as it possibly arose out of it, an extraordinary passion for machinery, into which the hon. gents. had been led, partly, as it appeared, by the hope of working cheaper, and partly, by that common error, of supposing that a great machine must be calculated to produce a great effect. Their machines were much like that which Hogarth represents, where the wedge, the lever, the axis in *paritrochio*, all the mechanical powers were introduced for the purpose of drawing a cork, an operation, which a waiter or butler would perform more effectually, as well as more expeditiously, by a little instrument from his pocket called a cork-screw. It was of the nature of all machinery that in proportion as the parts were complicated, the movement was likely to be slow, not to mention, that if any part should happen to be misplaced, or wanting or ill-adjusted, the whole must be at a stand. This was very much the case with some of the machines of the hon. gentlemen. In order to keep their expenses out of sight, and to throw as much as possible upon individuals, without the intervention of Parliament, they had set up their grand system of lord lieutenants, deputy lieutenants, lieutenants of division, inspectors of divisions, superintendants of parishes, &c., &c., persons very proper to be appointed, and

to be held in readiness, but very improper for much of the work on which they were employed, namely, that of getting the country into a state of military defence. Of all the instruments to work with for such a purpose, the worst, surely, that could be devised, was that of a deputy lieutenant's meeting. Every one had heard frequently, and almost proverbially, of the slow progress of official business. But at what rate must that business proceed, which had for its office a county? Which, instead of clerks with salaries, amenable to superiors, compellable to a certain attendance, acted by country gentlemen, subject to no authority, who were bound by no especial duty, who might attend as much or as little as they liked, and who might feel possibly that they conferred a favour every time that they attended at all? Offices, too, in which government business was transacted, were open commonly every day, and for many hours each day. But what must be the condition of that office, whose days of attendance were one in a week, and whose office-hours were about three in each of those days? This office was likewise a *corresponding* office: but what must be the activity of that correspondence, where between the letter and its answer there must be an interval always of a week? He took no notice here of the manner in which at such meetings business must necessarily be conducted, where few possibly had given much attention to the object in question, where no one had any right to prescribe to the rest, where many would come more to talk of their own private business or to meet those they were in quest of, than to promote the object in question, where most were impatient to be gone, where all had voices, and, what was possibly not the least evil, where every one had a right to declare that voice at as great length as he thought proper. He would not better illustrate the effects of the system which had thrown business into this course, than by stating what had happened upon the subject of signals. It might have been thought, that the arranging a system of signals, as it must have been among the earliest and most pressing objects of attention, that which, in some sort, was to give effect to every thing else, was the one also which would have been most easily accomplished, and most speedily carried into effect. The mode that had been adopted, was, too, of the most simple kind. A line of stations was to be established along the coast, placed under the direction of persons appointed by the Admiralty, and qualified to collect and to convey, by means of the Admiralty sig-

nals, such more detailed intelligence as was necessary for officers appearing off the coast, or commanding at the naval stations; while from this, as from a circumference, other lines were drawn inland, for the mere purpose of giving alarm, or for communicating a few of the more simple results of what had been observed upon the coast. Any one would suppose that this was a work, which would not take long in completing; considering that it was of that sort, which might be going on in all places at once, so that the time necessary for the whole would be no more than what had been required for the latest of the parts; and that in three weeks or a month from the first alarm, that is from the 8th of March, however much our means of resistance might have been wanting, we should at least not have been liable to see the enemy amongst us without notice of his approach. And so it would have been with any set of persons, who would have done things in a plain way; who would have been content "to draw a cork with a corkscrew." But not so, the savers of money, and the lovers of machinery. By seeking to divide the expense of these signals with the counties, and throwing the business, in consequence, into the train which he had described, the result was (the house would hear it with astonishment) that in some of the maritime counties, immediately exposed to the enemy, and where the attack was most expected, the system of signals, even in those parts of it, which were most essential, and on which the whole depended, was not completed to that very hour. It would naturally be inquired, how this could happen; and the explanation might be given, by stating only what had taken place in the county to which he belonged. When the deputy-lieutenants signified to the lieutenant of division, that stations must be prepared for the reception of the naval officers; the lieutenant of division did not care to stir in the business, till he knew whether the sums which he should advance, would be repaid to him by the deputy lieutenants. The deputy lieutenants on the other hand, were a little shy of engaging for this money, till they should know, whether they could make it good from the county: and, on the part of the county, it was quickly replied, that the lieutenants would look in vain for repayment there: for that the sums in question were no article for a county-rate, and in no county-rate should they be admitted. Here the matter hung for some time, and here it might have hung still longer, if the deputy-lieutenants, weary of this slow return of correspondence, and impatient of further delay

in a matter so important and urgent, had not resolved to take the risk upon themselves, and to direct the completion of the work, trusting that government would see them finally repaid. This government had engaged to do so; and the county of Norfolk might by that time, perhaps, be in possession of its signals. But by whose fault had it happened, that it was not in possession of them sooner? It must fairly be said, not by the fault of any one. The striking feature of the case was, that with so great a delay, and such a succession of persons, no one could be found to whom the delay was imputable. The lieutenant of division could not be blamed, for not being willing to advance his money, till he knew by whom he was to be repaid. The deputy lieutenants might well have been justified, had they persisted in refusing to the last, to take upon themselves an expense, which they had no means of recovering from the county. The county was well warranted in insisting that their charge was one, which was incurred for the general safety, and which ought to be defrayed by a general tax. The Admiralty were not to blame for delaying to send officers, and commence the expenses of their establishment, till they should know that houses were ready to receive them. But this successive justification of all the parties concerned in the measure, was the most complete condemnation of the system to which it belonged. What must that system of proceedings be, in which, when every party under it had done his duty, nine months could elapse, before the maritime counties were furnished with their establishment of signals? With this example he might safely close his account of the conduct of the hon. gents: as persons fit to direct the energies, and call out the resources of the country, at the present moment. The instance itself, as a circumstance in the situation of the country, was now of no great importance; as it might be hoped, that by this time, or at least in about a month more, the evil was, or would be, at an end, and the maritime counties be prepared with their signals. But it was not so with the state of the army, and of the military force of the country. Here was not only a great misconduct, but a great national evil and danger, present and future. The hon. gentlemen had not only not provided an army, but had brought things to a state, in which, without some great change, it was impossible that an army should be provided. The army of reserve, the only channel of recruiting not yet dry, would

soon, possibly, be dry likewise. It had yielded 7,000 men: it was doubtful how many more it had to yield. Whatever it gave to the army, was so much in diminution of its own numbers.—How much might continue to ooze in from it, in its decreased and decreasing state, was very uncertain; not to mention the dreadful expense and ruinous example of those successive enrolments—this double bounty. At all events the supply, in this way, had necessarily a termination. It was an artificial, not a natural cascade. As a supply, it must at last run out. When recruits should have entered from this army, equal to the original numbers, the measure was at an end. The army of reserve, therefore, could not be looked upon as a permanent mode of recruiting and reinforcing the army; and, in the mean while, by this and their other measures, ministers had laid the foundation of such difficulties, as would render it nearly impossible that any such mode should be devised in future. The probability was, that after yielding to the army a few more thousands, so much would just remain of the army of reserve, as would be sufficient to preserve the example of this anomalous force, and to make recruiting impossible by contributing, with the militia, to continue the high rate of bounties. In aid of all these mischiefs came the effect of the volunteer system, which, as the hon. gentleman had managed it, whether by design or by mistake, locked up 400,000 men of the active population of the country. What a blow was here! He was tempted to call out to the hon. gentleman, as the Roman Emperor did to his General, *Redde mihi, Vare, legiones*. Seventy thousand men and more, withdrawn from the supply of the army of reserve, by the militia; and 400,000 men withdrawn from both militia and army of reserve by the volunteers; and the army of reserve, the only source for recruiting the army; with what sort of men, and at what rate of recruiting, was the army likely to be supplied? All this, as a future consideration, the hon. gentlemen thought nothing of.—They had got, or thought they had got (they had in fact got no such thing), what was sufficient for present defence; and, beyond that, they never thought of looking. Defence was their utmost horizon. All beyond was clouds and darkness. But to those, who did not wish to bound their views merely by that consideration, who thought that if the country *was* to exist after the present dangers, it was of some consequence to consider what that existence was to be; to such

persons it would be a matter of anxiety to know, how the country was to proceed without the use of a disposable force, and if such a force should appear necessary or desirable, in what manner it was to be obtained. His ideas upon this subject had long since been declared, and he had not been able, by any subsequent reflection or inquiry, to get beyond the notions which he had at first formed. His opinion had been, and was, that, as a first step, there should be an universal abolition of the system of substitution. That all commutation for personal service (as commutation there must be), should be made by fixed fine, so as to render government the only recruiter in the market without competition from militia, army of reserve, or any other service. That to meet, and co-operate with the effects of the advantage thus given, service, in the army, should be changed from life to term of years; drafting should be formally abolished; means possibly devised to render service in the West-Indies less frequently necessary; and some other subordinate regulations adopted, calculated to give to the profession of a soldier advantages and attractions, additional to those, not inconsiderable ones, which it already had. With these things done, he was of opinion, that the condition of the country was not so changed, either as to the wealth or inclinations of the lower orders of its inhabitants, as to make it impossible, that, upon a greatly increased population, the army should be recruited as in former times. He was by no means sure, that if these methods had been adopted, at the time when they were first suggested (and still more if they had been adopted at a period somewhat earlier) the army would not have been recruited, and the general defence of the country increased, even at this moment, far beyond what it had been by the boasted measure of the army of reserve. That it would be so in the end, there could not be the smallest doubt. In a comparison of these measures, the same distinction must be observed, as gentlemen, accustomed to planting, knew how to make between a sown and a planted tree: though the latter would have the advantage at the beginning, and it might be, for some few years, it was known which would outstrip the other at the long run.—But should the danger at any moment be such, as not to wait the gradual progress of recruiting, however successful; or should the general success of recruiting, even in the new circumstances proposed, be less than he was willing to imagine, it would be then open to have recourse to compulsory mea-

asures; but measures so chosen, (that is to say, of which the abolition of substitution should make part), as to become a powerful *stimulus* to recruiting, instead of presenting any impediment to it. He was as little a friend to compulsory measures, where they could be avoided, as any other gentleman; but he would not court popularity, nor discredit his own judgment by describing them as unconstitutional. He had shewn, on a former occasion, together with several of his hon. friends, that so far from objecting factiously to any measure of government, or lying in wait to raise a cry against the hon. gentlemen, he was more ready than the hon. gentlemen had seemed to be, to brave that cry, in support of any measure of the sort alluded to, which the circumstances of the times might render necessary.—These were his ideas of the measures to be adopted, for creating that first and most indispensable requisite in the present state of the world, as well for the sake of immediate safety, as with a view to the future condition of the empire,—a regular and disposable military force. Instead of this, the hon. gentlemen seemed by their measures to be looking to any other force, rather than that of a regular army, the augmentation to which was as yet, by their own account, only 7,000 men, while by their general conduct they had brought the country to a state, in which, at the end of nine months, a line of cruisers, or (according to the expression of an old poet, whom he did not dare to quote in the original) “a single plank of wood,” was all that protected the country, he would not say, from the “grave,” but from evils and dangers, of a magnitude not to be described.

Mr. *Secretary Yorke*.—Sir; after the very long, and certainly very entertaining speech which you have just heard, I fear that I shall neither merit, nor be able to obtain from you and the House, that patience and that attention, which I shall have ample occasion for, in replying to the attacks that the right hon. gentleman has made on me, and on most of the measures of the present administration. The hon. gent. has quoted a passage of very indifferent poetry, to prove that there is “nothing good we say, and nothing wise we do;” but, in my opinion of the country, and of this House, the present government, if I may judge from the experience of the last session of Parliament, or the actual feelings of the people, has little to apprehend from the opposition of the right hon. gentleman, or the application of what he has quoted. During that session, it must be admitted, that we heard many excellent opposition

speeches (and I should be sorry that the right hon. gent. were deprived of the opportunity of amusing and instructing the House;) but then we had to set off against them some good ministerial votes, the cordial and zealous support of a very great majority of this House. The right hon. gent. has begun by condemning the constitution of the army, considering it as the whole of a military system; and has enforced, with all the eloquence and ingenuity that he is master of, the necessity of a total alteration in it: for considering, he says, the power, the means, and the intentions of France, it is absolutely incumbent on us to effect an entire change in our military system. I need scarcely repeat to the right hon. gent. that peculiarly constituted as the army of this empire is, there is no power, save and except the omnipotence of parliament, that can operate those changes he so forcibly recommends. The sanction of the legislature must precede the improvements (if improvements they are), that the right hon. gent. advises. I have no objection to taking the whole of our military system under general consideration, provided that the right hon. gent. will have the prudence to omit the minute details; for, I trust, that every one who hears me will allow, that a committee of this house is not the best or the fittest place to go into an accurate examination of the merits or defects of such a complicated system. The right hon. gent. has found much cause for disapprobation, in the defenceless and vulnerable state in which some part of the coast has been suffered to remain. In reply to this, I will frankly admit, that it is not in as good a state of defence as it might have been, considering our means, and the spirit of the people; but still I shall contend, that it is fully sufficient for the protection of the country, and capable of affording a very serious resistance to any probable effort of the enemy. The right hon. gent. has been particularly severe in his condemnation of two measures of the government, which took place immediately after the signing of the peace of Amiens, the disbanding of the army, and the disarming and dismantling of the navy. I must, Sir, most solemnly protest against the view which the right hon. gent. has taken of those measures, for the true state of the facts will not justify the inferences he has endeavoured to draw from them. At no period of our history was there ever, at the conclusion of a peace, an establishment both naval and military, maintained, that would support any comparison with that voted and sanctioned by this house, subsequent to the ratification of the defini-

tive treaty. Exclusive of that which took place in the cavalry, in which I admit it was considerable, the diminution in the rest of our force, the infantry, I mean, was very trifling indeed; not more than 7,000 men out of the whole of our regular army. The rest of those disbanded were troops whose services were limited, partly consisting of second battalions, who volunteered from the militia, whose time were within a year of expiration, and whose services, for that short time, government, for very cogent and prudential reasons, deemed it advisable to dispense with. With regard to the numerical enumeration of our force, I can meet the right hon. gent. not only with pleasure, but with absolute confidence on that head. I will state, for the information of that right hon. gent., and for the satisfaction of this house, that our regular force has been nearly doubled since last session of parliament. Instead of 60,000 we have now an effective regular force of 120,000 men. In this number I certainly mean to include the army of reserve, which has been incorporated with the regular army, and which, for every military purpose, is as effective as any regulars, although, perhaps, according to a phrase of the right hon. gentleman's, "they have not yet got the grass out of them." In answer to the right hon. gent.'s objections to the battalions of reserve, I will allow, that although they may not be as good as the others, still I will maintain, that such is the general practice in all, or most, of the great military services in Europe. There is scarcely one of them in which the practice does not prevail of establishing reserved battalions, or battalions of dépôt. Such a part of a military system is not unattended with great utility; it is equal to many and very important services, for undertaking garrison duty for instance, and by that means relieving the troops of the line, and adding to the disposable force of the country. As to the militia, I assert that they are as good as ever. Their number amounts to above 70,000 in England, and to 14,000 in Scotland. They have been inspected and seen under arms by a number of general officers, and they have extorted the applause and approbation of every person of military eminence who has seen them. The volunteers, as I before stated, amount to upwards of 379,000, among which there are 340,000 infantry, with a proportion, and certainly no inconsiderable one, of 17,000 officers. The rest of the volunteer force is made up of cavalry and artillery; and it is this numerous body of men, disciplined almost as well as any equal body of men could be in the time, that

the right hon. gent. is pleased to consider as not an effective force. Although, Sir, they may not at the outset be capable of meeting a regular army in line of battle, a circumstance, by the bye, not much to be apprehended, or expected in a country like this, yet still there are many possible contingencies in which they may be eminently useful. By acting on the flanks and rear of the enemy; by making demonstrations; by contributing, with their numbers, to increase to the eye of the enemy, the magnitude of our regular force; on these and similar occasions, they will not prove, as the right hon. gent. has said, an ineffective force, but a formidable and highly efficient one; and whenever the actual struggle comes, whenever they are to contend for their country and their homes, for every thing that is dear to their feelings and to their honour, I am confident that they will all be found to do their duty, and that many of them will enter into the line. As to the right hon. gentleman's objection to their clothing, I must allow that it is a matter of regret, that they have not all adhered to the national colour, and principally because as the departure from it may occasion some confusion. I even am tempted to wish, that they had all adopted the regulation clothing, although that is not of so very much importance, as it is impossible, when acting in large bodies, that an enemy could distinguish the difference at a few hundred yards distance. The right hon. gent. as he conceives, has made a still more serious objection against ministers, for he asserts, that the volunteer system at first made no part of their means of defence. Sir, in reply to this, I will only recal to this House an act which passed in the year 1802, in which, among others, there were express provisions, not only for continuing the old volunteers, but even for accepting new offers. Sir, it must be in the recollection of gentlemen, that such an act was before this House, and that it created no discussion. It was in vain that I wished to call the attention of the House to the whole of our military and volunteer system. The provisions and principles of that bill passed through the House, with little comment, and as little attention. Surely, if there had been any thing vicious in that system, it should have been resisted *in limine*. The General Defence Act, as it is entitled, did not embrace the volunteer system, not was it meant to supersede it. The proposition for exonerating the parishes, if volunteers should offer to a certain extent, was made with the unanimous concurrence of this House. The whole nation rose as one man, and it was from that cause that the idea of

parochial companies was laid aside. Was such an impetuous and gallant disposition on the part of the people, to be rejected by us? Were we to say to them, we won't accept your services, we will resort to our compulsory means? Sir, I need not suggest to the right hon. gent. how culpable, I should almost say, how criminal, government would have been, if they had not availed themselves of the spirit of the people, which we had never endeavoured to repress, as the hon. gent. has charged us with, but which, on the contrary, we have done every thing to promote. As to the state of the arsenals, though that appertains more immediately to the ordnance department, I will assert, that they never were more abundantly provided. Upwards of 400,000 stand of arms have been distributed, and it was the question of arms, and the question of exemptions, which first compelled the government to the determination of restricting the extent of the volunteer system. I lament, that I possess not the ability to reply to the whole of the ingenious speech, which the right hon. gent. has delivered. With regard to his observation about a directing mind, I, for my own part, will admit, that I am not fortunate enough to possess all the talent that the right hon. gent. does; but I will not yield to him, or any man, in the disposition to serve the country with zeal, and, I trust, with effect. We, Sir, will do right, if we can, and while we do so, we will expect the support of the country. With regard to the principle of fortifying, although that is the exclusive province of the Board of Ordnance, yet I shall make a few observations on that branch of our military system. I entirely coincide with the idea, that security is our best economy; and I will candidly allow, that in my opinion, that part of our system has been too much neglected; and it is on that account, that the plan which was submitted to Parliament, so far back as the year 1786, had not been adopted. Not that I think, consisting as the population of this country does of a brave and gallant race of men, surrounded by the sea, and encircled by a navy the most numerous, enterprising, and well-appointed of any in the world, that we have any occasion to resort to a very extensive plan of that species of defence. As to the Martello towers, which the right hon. gent. has recommended so strongly, and the advantages of which he has illustrated so clearly by an instance which I shall not attempt to dispute, I will say that their establishment depends upon the opinion of military officers,

and, if, advisable, most certainly should be adopted, wherever they are practicable. To the objections which the right hon. gent. has made to the particular mode of employing the Sea Fencibles, I will observe, that it is intended that some further arrangements, with respect to that branch of the national defence should be made in this session. Constituted as they are, even at this moment, they are eminently useful. They are competent to the manning of the gun-boats, and in that capacity, I am convinced, would be more than a match for any force of the same kind that France could send against us. Indeed, I think I should not say too much, if I hazarded the assertion that they would be able to beat all its boasted flotillas. The right hon. gent. has said much about adopting a compulsory system of recruiting the army, by a novel and rather extraordinary mode of putting an end to the volunteer system. I do not know, at least I have not made up my mind to say, whether the kind of compulsion the right hon. gent. recommends, be strictly constitutional or not. I know that it is within the omnipotence of Parliament to ordain it; but I much doubt that the army could ever be efficiently recruited by adopting the system of fining, and employing the revenue drawn therefrom in the manner the right hon. gent. has suggested. Much less do I approve of the practice resorted to on former occasions, I mean; that of allowing individuals to raise regiments. The bad effects of that system have been felt from experience, and it has not been thought advisable to recur to it again. I think there is but one more of the right hon. gentleman's suggestions, which it is necessary for me to advert to, and that is, the recommendation of enlisting for a certain term of years. To this there is one insuperable objection, and that is, that it could not be done without disorganizing the whole of our military system; for it must be extended to the whole of the army, or it would inevitably produce jealousies and dissatisfaction, that might prove fatal to that strict discipline and prompt obedience and alacrity without which an army is nothing. I am aware that such a practice prevailed in the Austrian service, and I know that it was one of the greatest defects in it. Let any man only consider the consequence that would attend the adoption of such a system, particularly if a number of troops were ordered abroad, whose period of service was nearly expired, and who possibly might have a claim to be discharged before they could arrive half way to the place of their desti-

nation. I am sure when the right hon. gent. reflects a little upon what he has thus recommended, he will have good sense enough to perceive the utter impracticability of it, and candour enough to acknowledge it. I have thus, as far as I am able, replied to every observation of the right hon. gent. which I have conceived to be material. I regret that I have been obliged to trespass so long upon the patience of gentlemen, and that they have been so ill repaid for the attention they have afforded me.

Mr. Pitt.—It is not my intention at present, Sir, to follow the example of my right hon. friend, (Mr. Windham) in taking that detailed and comprehensive view of the subject before the Committee; neither is it my intention to go into any retrospective discussion of the measures of government, nor to inquire whether the extraordinary means with which they were entrusted before the last prorogation of parliament, have been exercised with sufficient vigour and ability. Considering the danger with which the country was threatened as not yet past, convinced that the crisis still impends, and that still we have further efforts to exert, and further precautions to adopt, in order to enable us to meet it, I am anxious to direct your attention only to such points as are peculiarly urgent, and on which delay would be inconvenient, if not dangerous; and to suggest prospectively, the consideration of those objects which are immediately connected with the public security. I am still less inclined at present to examine all the questions that might be included in the resolutions presented to the Committee, opening a wide field of discussion of the conduct of government and the state of our defence. I wish to confine myself particularly to what is more directly before us—the nature, the amount, and the proposed management of the military force of the country. I am the more anxious to do this, as I have the misfortune to differ fundamentally from my right hon. friend, with regard to what should be the nature of that force to which we ought to look as a permanent source of safety throughout the whole of this contest, however long may be its duration. No man thinks more highly than I do of the importance of a regular military force, or of the regular force of this country. No man is more convinced that the excellence of regular military forces is unattainable in the same degree by any species of force which can be employed; but, in the last session of Parliament, I professed an opinion, which I still maintain, that there are other kinds of force to which, as subsidiary

to the regular force, and as composing a safe and efficient system of national defence, it is wise and proper to resort. Parliament itself, by sanctioning and regulating the volunteer system, adopted this principle; and if in the execution of that system, government have adhered to the policy which Parliament approved, and to the provisions it enacted, they must stand acquitted of all blame. On that subject, however, other parts of their conduct may be liable to censure. I was formerly, and still am of opinion, that to a regular army alone, however superior, however excellent, that to the regular army, even aided by the militia, we ought not solely to trust; but that in a moment so eventful, in a crisis so full of danger, in a contest so singular in its character, and which perhaps may be tedious in its duration, we ought to superadd to the regular army some permanent system of national defence, either to a certain degree compulsory or formed upon the voluntary zeal and patriotism of the country itself. This ought to be resorted to as the grand source of domestic security. The army must be the rallying point; the army must furnish example, must afford instruction, must give us the principles on which that national system of defence must be formed, and by which the volunteer forces of this country, though, in a military view inferior to a regular army, would, fighting on their own soil, for every thing dear to individuals and important to a state, be invincible. Looking at the nature and probable turns of the contest in which we are engaged, I wish to see that system of defence employed, not merely for domestic security, but so matured and regulated, as not only to carry the volunteer corps to as high a degree of perfection as such bodies can be carried, but also to enable us to use the regular army in its full extent, in any way which circumstances might point out as eligible, either for annoying the enemy where they are assailable by our separate efforts, or on a large scale; should a prospect open for contributing to the deliverance of Europe from the oppression under which it groans, and for the reduction of that ambitious power, by which the peace of the world is disturbed. —Contemplating all these great and important objects, I cannot but rejoice that the volunteer system has been formed. I see nothing to complain of government for the extent to which it has been carried; neither do I complain that it has fallen short of what we could wish or expect. I wish only that in the provisions which were enacted, with regard to its extent, the numbers had been allotted with some relation to the local posi-

tion and peculiar danger of the different parts of the country. I only wish that when it was fixed generally, that the volunteer force might be six times the number of the militia, a greater proportion had been assigned, or a facility had been reserved, of increasing it in the maritime counties; or in those most vulnerable and most exposed to the first attacks of the enemy. I am sorry that a different distribution was not adopted with reference to the grand object of resisting and repelling the attempt at invasion, in the first moment it should be made. I am confirmed by the opinions of much better judges than I can pretend to be of such a matter, that a much smaller force would be sufficient to harass or defeat the enemy on their first landing, than a much larger force, after they had landed and recovered from the effects of their voyage. Both, therefore, with regard to the economy of money, but with regard to a much more important economy—that of lives, it would have been desirable that the number of volunteers should have been increased and encouraged in proportion to the proximity to the coast, and to those points which are most liable to attacks. Such a distribution as to the means of defence would be more effectual, and much more desirable, on account of the object. Although the force as now allotted, might and would, when put in motion, be adequate to defeat the enemy's attempt, yet it would be painful to think that any progress should be made in the invasion of this country, and if the volunteers from the more distant parts should at last arrive to take their share in the victory, yet the greater the force that could immediately be brought to act, the sooner would the enemy be subdued, and the less should we have to regret the loss and the disgrace of our enemy fixing himself in the heart of our territory. But, on the other hand, wishing that no effort should be unemployed, that no means of safety should be neglected, I am desirous that while we make provision for meeting the enemy the moment he touches the British soil, prepared to repel him from our shores, to charge him as soon as he ascends the beach, we ought likewise to be ready in case of necessity to meet him with fresh armies, to overpower him with fresh armies, and even if it should be requisite, to bring army after army against him till he was finally discomfited. I, therefore, do not condemn the volunteer system in the interior, in the utmost extent to which it has been carried: all I mean to say is that it was calculated to be of great utility and might have admitted a greater extension in those districts, on which must fall the first

struggle for the independence of the country.—Having said so much on the volunteer system in general, I come now to consider by what means it may be rendered not merely a nominal force, not a pompous display to alarm the enemy with the multitude we can draw out against them, not merely a number of men upon paper, but an efficient and permanent force, always improving, always approaching nearer to the perfection of a regular military establishment.—As far as I can perceive from the estimates submitted to the House, and from the opening of the hon. gent., no provision is made for introducing any improvement into the volunteer system, or from securing greater benefits from it than we now obtain, or even for maintaining and securing those we already enjoy. Yet, with as much enthusiastic ardour for the volunteer institution, with as much admiration of the spirit and patriotism from which it sprung, as any man can boast, I must say that from all that I have seen, and all that I have heard from those most capable of observing and of judging, it does not appear to me that we should be doing justice to ourselves, that we should wisely and effectually avail ourselves of the means of safety within our reach, if we hesitated or delayed to render the volunteer system, what it is susceptible of being made, a system of solid, permanent defence, a source of great and extensive national energy.—Upon this part of the subject, I am afraid I must totally disagree with my right hon. friend. So far am I from thinking that there has been any fault in endeavouring to introduce too much system into the volunteer institution, and to bring it near to the discipline and qualifications of a regular army; that I think too little has been done to promote what I consider a most desirable object. I cannot agree with him, that the men who compose the volunteer corps would be most usefully employed as a mass. If that were the case, all that would be necessary would be enrolment, arms, and previous appointment of leaders. Even these, combined with the spirit and zeal of the brave people of this country, might be ultimately sufficient to ensure us victory, but they would conquer amidst greater disadvantages, and at a greater expense. It was the object of the legislature, in the measures adopted last session for the public defence, to assist and to regulate the spirit and zeal of the country, and by the help and system of discipline and instruction to enable a smaller number to do that which a much larger number would hardly effect without them; to enable them finally to prevail over the assault of a foreign invader, with less ex-

penditure of their own lives, and with less peril to the country.—From what I have observed, and from what I have heard of the state of the discipline of the Volunteers, I am more and more convinced, that in order to bring them to any considerable degree of discipline, they must be assembled in bodies, and that if they continue in companies they will make but little comparative progress. It seems desirable, therefore, that wherever it can be done, they should be formed into battalions. When that cannot be done, they ought to be formed and brought together into as numerous connected bodies as circumstances will permit, so as to have the benefit of inspection and discipline. It appears to me extremely desirable, therefore, that every battalion of volunteers should, in addition to its own officers, have the assistance of two officers of the service, one a field officer and one an adjutant, to assist in the instruction and discipline of the corps. These officers should be considered as belonging to the army, and should in every respect enjoy their rank, pay, and other advantages, as if they were actually serving in the army. The expense of this arrangement would be considerable; but from what I know of the great superiority which a battalion, with the benefit of such officers, has over one trained under their own officers without such assistance, though with the utmost zeal and diligence, I am satisfied that the expense would be abundantly compensated by the perfection which the corps would attain. I do not know what the expense of allowing two officers of the description I have mentioned would be. At present I see no provision made for such an object. Neither do I know what proportion there is between the volunteer corps formed prior to the 3d Aug. and subsequent to that period; nor how many adjutants are allowed agreeably to the regulations now existing upon the subject. I should imagine, however, upon a conjectural view of the matter, that the whole expense of a field officer and adjutant for every battalion would not exceed 160,000 or 180,000*l.* a year. Now, this expense surely is trifling in comparison with rendering 350,000 an efficient and improving force. If the expenditure of such a sum were to contribute so materially to the efficiency of the volunteer force, no gentleman could hesitate to purchase, at so cheap a rate, this permanent and solid source of public security.—I confess, however, that though I consider this arrangement as of the first importance to the discipline and perfection of the volunteer corps, some farther regulations will be necessary, in order

to obtain the full benefit we desire. Even all the service which experienced officers could render, would be inadequate, if the number of days which the volunteers are by law required to drill, were to continue so limited as it is at present. I understand that the number of volunteers existing previous to the 3d Aug. is 400,000. Where pay is allowed to those accepted and embodied, since that period, it is allowed only for 20 days. All are agreed, that this is not sufficient. Even government seem to be aware of this, for the condition on which one adjutant is allowed, is that the corps shall drill 84 days. But surely it is unreasonable to expect, that these corps which are to receive pay only for 20 days, shall drill 84, in order to entitle themselves to the advantages of an adjutant. Probably it would be right, that some change in particulars should take place, and that the number of days in a year required for drill should be from 40 to 50 or perhaps 60 the first year, and 40 after. These, however, are points of detail to be afterwards considered, and do not affect the general principle of the measure, I have thought it my duty to suggest to the committee. — If then, it were deemed advisable, as I have proposed, to increase the number of days for drill, and to allow pay for that additional number, 30 or 40 shillings more for each man would be required. The whole expense for officers, and for additional pay on the principles above stated, would probably not exceed 500,000*l.* per annum ; but if it had the effect to render your volunteers an efficient force, and to form them into a subsidiary army, constantly improving in discipline, I am satisfied, that it would be found the cheapest part of our military establishment. — If it should be necessary to detach the regular army on any foreign service, if the enemy were to effect a landing in Ireland, and should a large proportion of the regular army be required to expel them from that part of the empire, we could, without putting too much to hazard, rely on the discipline as well as courage of a national force so constituted. That it may be necessary to send a large proportion of the army on such service, we may judge by the experience we have had how near the enemy, notwithstanding the vigilance and the superiority of our fleets, were effecting a landing in Ireland ; and it is our duty to be prepared not only to guard against such accidents, but to avail ourselves of any favourable opportunity of turning our arms to the annoyance of the foe. No man relies more on the valour of Englishmen than I do, or estimates more highly what it is able to per-

form, but respectable as the volunteers are, I should consider it rash and hazardous to trust solely to their exertions, constituted as they now are, should any emergency arise to oblige us to detach a great part of the regular army. I believe, however, that there is scarce a man who does not concur in thinking, that if any favourable opportunity were to arrive of carrying the war to the continent, if any prospect were to appear of rousing the spirit and supporting the exertions of those states that now bend in abject submission to the despotism of France ; if we could rekindle any hope of effecting the deliverance of Europe from the yoke under which it groans ; in such objects the army of this country might be most usefully employed ; in such undertakings it might gloriously co-operate. Circumstances may arise, in which, perhaps, we might aid in various continental operations. Perhaps our arms might be instrumental in delivering his Majesty's electoral dominions from the grinding dominion of France ; perhaps they might concur in wresting Holland from the same yoke, and might replace that system of Europe, at least in many points essential to our own safety, which the enemy has overthrown. Is it not of the utmost importance then, to prepare to act with vigour and with effect, when these or similar opportunities present themselves ? And if we have the means in our power of establishing a system adequate to domestic security, and calculated to enable us to exert our strength in offensive operations, every man must admit that 500,000*l.* is a small expense compared with such signal advantages. — I own, therefore, that if these ideas are agreeable to the sense of the committee, I should rejoice to see them speedily carried into execution, that we may the sooner reap the fruits of them. We have now gone through that part of the year, in which the danger of an attack on our own shores was most likely to take place ; and when the ports of Holland are locked by the season, there seems to be less probability of the attempt of invasion being made upon England for some months. We should not, however, act as if the danger were wholly blown over, and the attempt wholly abandoned. We should in this interval diligently apply ourselves to complete our means of defence, so that in the spring we may command every species of security, which the resources of the country are calculated to afford. If it be the opinion of the House, that officers should be assigned to the different volunteer battalions the sooner it is done the better, that they may have time to form acquaintance with

the officers with whom they would have to act, and the men they would have to command, before the season for military operation returns. I should wish, therefore, that even this night at least before the recess, the house should pass a vote for carrying this object into effect. I am the more urgent for this, because it appears to be the only object connected with the Estimates that calls for our immediate attention. Other points may be reserved for future discussion, but if Parliament separates without making provision for the expenses which the objects I have pointed out will require, there will be no opportunity of making up for the time which must thus be lost in carrying the plan into execution.—But even in addition to this improvement on the volunteer system, it will be necessary in order to give it due effect, that it should be accompanied with some new regulations of detail, the purpose of which will be to keep up the number of the volunteers to the full amount, to ensure punctuality of attendance, to promote steadiness, attention, and soldierly habits, and, though without putting the corps under martial law provide for that obedience and discipline requisite to form the military character. Looking forward, as I am afraid we must, to the long duration of the present contest, it is of the utmost importance to prepare a system of defence which will be commensurate to the necessity of our situation, and adequate to every purpose, both of defensive and offensive war. We have already seen what exertions, what sacrifices, the people of this country are ready to make under the guidance of parliament, under the impulse of zeal for its honour and independence, under a sense of the danger with which they are threatened. This zeal and this spirit, prompting such generous and unanimous efforts, may perhaps induce the enemy to abandon the project which he has presumptuously conceived and rashly proclaimed. Perhaps, after viewing us on every side, after reconnoitring our position, he may be forced virtually to admit that we are unassailable. Perhaps, he may apparently abandon his designs; but we must not suffer ourselves to be lulled into a fatal security. We must not relax our efforts, or intermit our preparations, while any measure of wise precaution remains to be adopted. We must take care that the enemy shall not do, by surprise, what he finds he cannot do when he has given us warning. Indeed we are not to expect, that after the force of the country has been let down, the enemy will always be so confident and so indiscreet as to give us ten months previous notice of the attack

which he meditates. If, upon the apparent abandonment of the project of invasion, the people of this country were to indulge themselves in congratulation on their escape, there is some danger that the spirit which has proved our safety would subside, and these efforts be relaxed. The volunteer system might thus moulder away. It is necessary therefore, to give it that consistency and vigour which will keep it alive when the pressure which first produced it has subsided. Thus, even were the enemy suddenly to resume his design, we should be found prepared to meet and to defeat the enterprize.—It is the duty of the House, therefore, to devise means for attaining this end. The House, thinking for the people and providing for their welfare, will adopt suitable measures, to give permanent system to this measure of defence, instead of trusting that the spirit of the people will supersede the duties of the government. Let us be on our guard that no temporary or apparent abandonment of the meditated attack shall induce us to disarm. It would be advisable, that whenever the volunteers become too few in any districts the compulsory act of last session for calling out and disciplining the people should be put in force. Care must be taken likewise that the volunteers shall fulfil the intention of the legislature in their efficiency as well as number. Regulations must be established by summary fines to secure attendance, and provisions made for enforcing discipline, and inducing military habits. Exemptions should not be allowed but where these conditions are complied with, and no person should be allowed to withdraw from a corps without permission of the commander, or without finding a substitute of proper military age. These points I merely hint at, as they are matters of detail that may be afterwards discussed, and are less pressing than those to which I have particularly called the immediate attention of the Committee. If I am right, however, in my general ideas respecting the allowance of officers to volunteer corps, the execution of this measure admits of no delay. I am strongly inclined, therefore, to move a resolution for granting 500,000*l.* for this object. Before I sit down, I wish to say a few words respecting the exemptions to which volunteers are entitled. It appears that what is understood to be the law on the subject is not what the legislature intended. As the law stands, however, no exemption is allowed unless the person claiming it produces a certificate that he has attended 24 drills previous to the 21st of Sept. But there are many who have attended twice that number

of drills without having such a certificate, and therefore would be subject to the ballot. If any doubt remains as to the exemptions, it is but right that the legislature should pass an act clearing it up, that those who were influenced by the prospect of exemptions, which they conceived were held out to them, may not have cause to complain that they were deceived by the ambiguity of the acts of parliament. There is another point. The law says, that to entitle to exemption the volunteers claiming it must have been exercised with arms; yet in some places it was impossible to procure arms; nor am I surprised at it, considering the great and sudden demand for supplying the Army of Reserve and the great number of volunteers throughout the country. Yet, in such cases, it surely would be unreasonable to refuse the exemption when the claimants had actually learnt many very important, and perhaps some of the most tedious parts of discipline without arms. It surely would be hard, then that people in this situation should be liable to the ballot during the Christmas holidays, when by the spirit of the Acts of Parliament, they ought perhaps, in preference to others, to be exempted. — These few observations I have thought it my duty to submit to the Committee, feeling a most anxious wish to avoid every topic that could interfere with the consideration of what is necessary to the public defence, and at the same time desirous to direct your attention to those points most essential to it. The subject of the Sea Fencibles has been alluded to, and I think has been misunderstood by my right hon. friend. Upon this head I may be allowed to speak with some confidence, as, from local situation, I have had an opportunity of examining it with care. If the sea fencibles were composed of men liable to serve in the navy, the objections to it would be well founded; but this is not the case. They are composed of seafaring men; it is true, but chiefly pilots and others, obliged, not merely by their own pursuits, but by their importance to the commercial interests of their country, to remain at the places of their residence. These men are intended to man the boats which have been prepared for the defence of the coast, and only armed with pikes in situations where they could not act with any other weapons. Indeed, I wish that the Admiralty had displayed more diligence in preparing those vessels which the sea fencibles were intended to man. This species of force will, I am confident, be found of the utmost utility in case of any attempt to invade our shores, and will evince the same superiority

over the flotillas of France, which the other branches of our navy have evinced over the maritime force of the enemy; and when brought to trial will neither disappoint the hopes, nor lower the character of the country.

Mr. *Secretary Yorke* observed, that the right hon. gent. (Mr. Pitt) had urged the necessity of voting more money than was now proposed for the service of the volunteers, in order to make them, as he advised, more perfect, by means of the addition of a field officer and an adjutant; and he had stated his conviction, that this would have a very good effect. He wished with the right hon. gent. that this important force should be made as complete as the nature of it was capable, consistently at the same time with necessary economy. But he could not help observing on that subject, that time would be necessary to consider this matter before it should be adopted. In all the corps adjutants were allowed pay; but it could not be contended that they should be allowed pay for the whole year, if they had to attend only 84 days, as stated by the right hon. gent.; and government should not rashly run into this sort of expense. The last act of parliament made upon this subject, provides, that the volunteer corps should be subject to such regulations as his Majesty should think fit to make, and the compulsory clause in the act for calling out the mass, might be referred to as occasion should require. He observed, that although 20 days pay was to be allowed to those who had been trained for 20 days, yet they were not to be allowed it unless they had been trained and exercised on the Sunday preceding. And most of the volunteer corps had been exercised 40 and 50 days, and many of them much more. Now, all the volunteer corps had not only adjutants upon their establishment, but they were entitled to pay; yet they were not entitled to pay until called out; and upon the principle of economy, he did not think that government would be justified in granting them permanent pay, unless their attention to the station was permanent. It could not be expected that they should receive pay for the whole year, for 84 days, any more than for 40 or for 20 days. He thought, however, that what was stated by the right hon. gent. deserved great consideration. He said he wished to be careful of incurring great expense: he did not say it was an expense that ought not to be incurred although the price was stated to be 500,000*l.* It certainly was not absolutely necessary to be voted to-night, because the present resolution proposed to the Committee, if adopted as it stood, would

not preclude the other from being adopted afterwards; for it might be voted at any time, as a sum of money on account of the volunteer service, and that, if necessary, might be very easily granted; but that would be improper now, not only because it was not clear that the plan was eligible, although he did not say it was not, but also because the expence of the volunteer corps, as it stands at present, is not yet well ascertained; for these reasons he should hope that the right hon. gent. would not persist in this plan for the present. With regard to the advice of the right hon. gent. with respect to the maritime counties, that they should have a larger proportion of volunteers than the inland counties, it had been already adopted he did not know whether to the full extent or in exact proportion that they ought to be in each particular instance, but certainly to a very considerable extent. In Devonshire, for instance, there were not less than 12,000 exclusive of Plymouth and the Dock. The same might be said of Portsmouth. As to Kent, there was a difference of opinion; it appeared, however, that from 10 to 11,000 had been raised there, beside those of the Cinque Ports, some of which were in Sussex, as the committee knew, but in all they amounted to 5,000 men; so that the volunteers in the county of Kent were not less than 15,000 men. This he apprehended, would shew the committee that the maritime counties in the south of the island had been allowed to raise volunteers, in a manner suitable to the distinction stated by the right hon. gent. So again in the counties of Cumberland and Durham, and those that extended to that part of the coast, there was a greater number of volunteers raised than in other counties; not that the inland counties were scanty, but the maritime counties were abundant in the number of volunteers.—Now, on the subject of exemptions, it was a subject on which he should not enter into detail: there had been doubts entertained, and these doubts arose out of the act of Parliament; some of which doubts, he could not help saying, were occasioned by those who had not read the bill. Some of these points he had stated.—However, if these doubts were so considerable as he apprehended them to be, it would be proper, even before the recess, that a bill should be brought in to remove those doubts. He then proceeded to explain what he understood to be the operation of the army of reserve, as it bore on the subject alluded to, by those who had already spoken, and then repeated, that as he understood a considerable number of gentlemen wished to have the matter of exemp-

tion of the volunteer corps better explained than it is at present, he should propose to bring in a bill for that purpose, and observed, that he should propose it before the recess; for he thought it essential to remove doubts upon that subject.

Mr. *Windham* explained what he meant in that part of his speech which adverted to sea fencibles, to refer only to the places in which they were to be employed: all he wanted was, that they should be employed in proper places, and for proper purposes.

Mr. *T. Grenville* was surprised that his right hon. friend and relation (Mr. Pitt) had thought it was only expedient at this time, to take a prospective view of public affairs; he considered the present as the natural and fit occasion, not only for examining the military arrangements which government proposed prospectively to adopt, but also for examining what use ministers had made of those powers, which, in a former session, were entrusted to them by parliament. He did not think any thing said by the right hon. gent. opposite to him (Mr. Yorke) such an answer to the objection of his right hon. friend as to have called on him, or any other of those who embraced his sentiments, to make any observations on the present occasion, had it not been from what fell from his right hon. relation (Mr. Pitt). With every wish to agree in any opinion expressed by that right hon. relative, he could not bring his mind to concur in the sentiments which had fallen from him that night. He thought his right hon. friend had taken a contracted view of the subject. No evidence was before the House of the volunteers being at all in a state of becoming effective. How then could it be argued, that they could ever become so completely effective as to prove a substitute for our regular army? It was not, perhaps, common to give an account to the house of the amount of the regular army. It was easy however, for any gentleman, comparing the statement of the sec. of state with the other known branches of our military establishment, to know what that force actually was. The whole was stated by the sec. at war to amount to 120,000. By subtracting the militia we could at once see the amount of our regular force. The militia was 70,000, which being deducted from the whole regular force, as stated by gentlemen themselves, there remained 50,000. In this number, it was necessary to observe, the army of reserve was comprehended. Was it possible, then, to conceive that such was the force of the regular army of this country?—But he did not wish to stand on any small ground of objection. It was known pretty well what was the

state of our regular force in March last, at the commencement of hostilities. The inadequate state of our military preparation, he at that time thought a charge of a serious nature against government. But, if it was then regarded as a crime, that the regular force of this country only amounted to 20 or 25,000, what were we to think of the energy or exertion of that government, which in the space of eight months, during which every nerve ought to have been stretched to render our situation more suitable to the danger which threatened us, had increased that force only from 8 to 10,000 men; and who had, in the mean time, been compelling every man to enter into a military service of a different nature, to the destruction of that service, which it was their bounden duty to encourage and support. He had heard from his right hon. relation, that doubts were entertained as to the exception from the army of reserve in favour of volunteers, and he was still more surprised to hear from a right hon. gent. in administration; that such exemption actually existed. He knew that, in the part of the country with which he was best acquainted, the greater part of the volunteers had been enrolled under the express explanation that they were liable to the ballots under the existing acts. It was only represented to them, that as every person must serve, it might be more agreeable to them to serve in their own particular district, or in any particular corps, than to be drafted into the general levy. This exemption was the very cause of the deficiency of the army of reserve; it seemed, therefore, rather remarkable that it should be conferred on persons enrolled under the express understanding that they were not to be entitled to it. Thus were we destroying our regular establishment, and putting the death blow to that force which had lately gained such laurels to themselves and to their country! While we pretended to be inviting continental alliances, we were depriving ourselves of the means of profiting by them. The army of reserve he could not view as equal to the militia. They were subject to be drafted into other corps, and therefore their officers could never feel that military pride in them which was indispensable in an effective force. The discouragements, too, which the extraordinary bounties given in the army of reserve must have thrown on the recruiting for the regulars, was beyond calculation; and the army of reserve being raised by such immense bounties, must interfere with the recruiting in the regular army; and, besides this, he conceived the army of reserve and those of the regulars to

be a very improper mixture, for this reason, that one man who had received a bounty of 8l. or 10l. and who was bound to go to any part of the world, and to continue in the service for life, would have another by his side who had received 50l. bounty, and who was not bound to go out of this island, nor to continue his services longer than the present war. The one of these would naturally laugh at the other. With regard to the act for regulating volunteers, it was so defective, that many very cruel hardships were felt by volunteers. He stated the case of some volunteers who had exercised sixteen days without arms. The lord lieutenant advised them not to train any more until they had arms; for that otherwise they would lose the benefit of the act, which required that they should have been trained with arms for a part of this time. They accordingly desisted for the four days waiting for arms, but they got none. In the mean time, they were ballotted in for the militia, and when they claimed their exemption as volunteers, they could not be exempted: thus they lost their exemptions, not by any act of their own, but by the act of government. This shewed the absolute necessity of revising this act. Mr. Grenville concluded by observing, that if government do not take some means to place the regular army of the country upon an effective system, instead of applying themselves to the increase of the volunteer force, much as he respected those corps, yet he must feel the House would not do its duty if it rested contented with a force merely to assist a regular army at home.

Lord Castlereagh.—I perfectly concur in the opinion, with which the right hon. gent. who spoke last (Mr. Grenville) has opened his speech; "that the present is the natural and fit occasion, not only for examining the military arrangement, which government proposes prospectively to adopt, but also for examining what use ministers have made of those powers which, in a former session, were entrusted to them by parliament" nor should I be disposed to complain that another right hon. gent. (Mr. Windham) should have questioned upon the present occasion the policy of that system of measures, to which the sanction of parliament was formerly given, did not the review which he has taken of that system, appear to me not so much calculated to guide our policy hereafter, as most unjustly to depreciate and disparage the various efforts, which the country has made for its security, and to deny to all, except the troops enlisted for general service, the share of merit and

value which fairly belongs to them in a military point of view.—In examining the use government has made of the powers vested in them by parliament, I am perfectly prepared to admit, that more ample means were never afforded to any former ministers, that no former occasion called for equal exertions; and, that in no period of our history had the government a people more willing to answer every call upon their exertions, or one more eager to make every sacrifice for the public safety. I think it is but fair, that the conduct of government should be tried, as the right hon. gent. has proposed, with reference to the time they have had to act; to the means afforded them, and to the temper of the country, under which those means were to be employed. But, before I state shortly to the committee what the King's ministers have accomplished for the defence of the country since parliament last separated, I am anxious to rescue the military system, then decided upon from two imputations, which the right hon. gent. (Mr. Windham) appears to me very unjustly to have thrown upon it.—The first is, "that the measure of the army of reserve and the high bounties resulting therefrom, have essentially crippled, if not destroyed, the recruiting of men for general service, in considering which, the right hon. gent. recurs to his former suggestion of balloting men for general service, denying to persons so balloted the option of serving by substitutes. I am not disposed at present to argue the expediency of a measure of such extreme rigour. I wish only now to state what has been the effect upon the recruiting service of that measure, which he so much condemns. It appears, that out of 35,000 men, already raised for the army of reserve, 7,500 have entered for general service. It is to be observed, that this number has entered in a period of less than two months, the enlisting having commenced only in the beginning of Oct. and having been suspended, with a view to the better discipline of this force, since the 1st. Dec. The hon. gent. will therefore find, that this measure, which he describes as so fatal to the recruiting service, has in the short space of two months produced nearly as many men for general service as had been obtained in the preceding year, by the ordinary mode of recruiting even at that period, when neither the militia nor the army of reserve were in progress.—The right hon. gent. very naturally conceives, that the high bounty must have altogether suspended the ordinary mode of recruiting; but here again experience is pre-

ferable to theory, and we find, that although the number of recruits so raised has been of late diminished, as I understand, about one-third, yet it has by no means had the effect, at least not in the extent which has been attributed to it by the right hon. gent. of injuring the ordinary recruiting service.—The next material objection urged against the system, is with respect to the volunteers. After depreciating the efficiency of that important branch of our public force, and giving the preference to an armed peasantry, unorganised and undisciplined, it is said that the present force is not only bad in itself, but that it locks up a large proportion of our military population, and deprives us of their services for many more useful purposes.—This objection I must positively deny. The exemptions granted to the volunteers, without doubt, make the ballot both for the militia and the army of reserve fall more severely upon persons not enrolled in these corps; and as we know that, in point of fact, few balloted men ever serve in person, it certainly operates as an increase of tax upon those who are not thus enrolled; but in what shape can this be said to lock up any part of our population, so as to interfere with their becoming regular soldiers? Is there any thing to prevent a man serving in a volunteer corps from entering into the militia, or the regular army? Is it not, on the contrary, an ascertained fact, that any description of military service ripens and prepares the feelings of men for one more extended? It must then appear evident, that however it may shift the question of expense, in providing substitutes, from one class of the community to another, yet, so far from narrowing the amount of substitutes to be procured, it has the directly contrary effect, inasmuch as it cannot fail to infuse a military spirit into many men, whose minds would never otherwise have received the same direction.—Having, I trust, removed the main objections that have been urged against the system itself, I wish to state to the committee what has been the result of it, as administered by his Majesty's ministers, and to afford them a general outline of the means of defence that have already been provided, under the heads of army, navy, and ordnance.—In stating the present military force, it appears most satisfactory, to combine the whole number, of every description, at present subsisting in Great-Britain and Ireland. The gross force naturally divides itself into troops on permanent pay, and those liable to service in the event of invasion. Of the first description

there are at present in Great Britain and in the islands of Jersey and Guernsey, 130,000 men; and in Ireland, 50,000 men, making in the whole 180,000 rank and file. The right hon. gent. who spoke last (Mr. Grenville) seems to have been impressed with an idea that, of this force, but a very small proportion was disposable for general service, and he attempted to prove to the committee, that we had not the means, if a favourable opportunity presented itself for offensive operations, of furnishing an adequate force for that purpose. To prove this, he supposed the militia quite complete, and deducting the whole number to which that force may by law be carried, he thereby diminishes the real amount of the disposable force.—I can, however, have no objection to state distinctly the actual composition of the 180,000 rank and file, of which the army of the United Kingdom at home at present consists. The effective rank and file of the militia in Great Britain and Ireland amount to 84,000 men; the regular force to 96,000, of which 27,000 are for limited service, and 69,000 at this moment disposable for general service, in whatever proportion circumstances may render it prudent so to apply them.—The next great feature of our military strength is the volunteer force, of which there are at present in Great Britain, accepted and arrayed, 340,000 men, and in Ireland 70,000, making a total of 410,000 rank and file in the United Kingdom, to which must be added, as connected with our defence on shore, though also applicable to service afloat, the sea fencibles, exceeding 25,000 men. The gross force of rank and file, at present on foot, is therefore as follows: army in the field 180,000; volunteers 410,000; sea fencibles 25,000; total rank and file 615,000, adding thereto officers, non-commissioned officers and drummers. The gross force in Great Britain and Ireland (exclusive of various other auxiliary means of defence) amounts to not less than 700,000 men, and with respect to the more regular part of this army, namely, that which is kept constantly in the field, it may be considered as applicable, without any deduction, to meet the enemy, as it will be relieved by the other descriptions of force from those detailed services which in general occasion so serious a deduction from the fighting men of an army, whilst the efficiency of the volunteer corps is such as may fully qualify them, if the occasion should require it, not only to co-operate, in their due proportion, with the regular army,

but to be brought into the line immediately opposed to the enemy.—I am aware it may be said, that but a proportion of this force is at present armed. Whatever delicacy may usually belong to subjects of this nature, I feel no disposition, and see no reason why I should conceal from the country, in this or any other respect, its true situation. Of the force in Ireland, consisting of 120,000 men, the whole is armed, and means are provided for arming, without delay, a still greater number of volunteers. Of the 495,000 men at present in Great Britain, there are armed as follows: Army in the field 130,000, volunteers 220,000, sea fencibles 25,000—375,000. Remaining to be armed with muskets 120,000—495,000. Of the latter, however, a very considerable number are at this moment provisionally armed with pikes, nearly 80,000 having been already issued from the ordnance. It is further to be remarked, that although the distribution of arms has been, in the first instance, directed, so as to complete the corps of the metropolis, and the counties on the coast, there has been issued, at the same time, such a proportion of arms to the corps of the interior, as was deemed sufficient for the purposes of immediate instructions and arrangements have been made, which will enable the government to arm from the larger dépôts of arms still unissued, and which are daily augmenting, whatever proportion of this force it may be found expedient, under any emergency, to assemble for service.—Such is the present state of our army; that of our navy is not less calculated to inspire confidence, and to ensure the public safety, as far as security can be accomplished by naval means. Without entering into a minute detail of the several classes of ships, of which that navy is at this moment composed, it is enough to state to the Committee, that the number of ships of war at present amounts to 469, and that in aid of the regular navy, and for the purposes of coast defence, an armed flotilla, to the extent of 800 craft of all descriptions, is further completed, and further surveys are in progress for extending that number.—It must be gratifying to perceive the voluntary exertions of the country displayed not less strongly in the naval than in the land defence, and although the exertions of other portions of the community, too numerous to admit of specification, are equally to be admired, it is impossible not to allude to the dis-

tinguished example which has been given upon the present occasion by the East-India company, and the corporation of the Trinity House: 20 armed ships have been furnished for the public service by the former, and ten frigates have been manned by the latter for the defence of the Thames, which, in aid of its other ample naval defences, may be considered as rendering that important part of our frontier, absolutely impenetrable.—When the committee reflect on the naval means which the country at this moment possesses, and when they compare them with any means of annoyance which the enemy can command, although it can never induce them to trust the protection of the country exclusively to that description of force, which must depend in some degree upon an uncertain element for its means of acting, yet they must feel that they have every thing to hope, as the enemy have every thing to dread, from the exertions of our navy.—It would be injustice not to notice, with the praise that belongs to it, the distinguished share which the ordnance department has borne in the execution of the present armament. In the habits of providing for a military system upon a scale altogether dissimilar to that upon which the wisdom of Parliament has thought it expedient at present to act, the ordnance has been prepared to meet, almost at the outset of the war, the unparalleled demands that have been made upon it. Since the commencement of hostilities, there have been issued by the ordnance 312,000 muskets, 16,000 pistols, and 77,000 pikes, reserving in store such an amount of arms, as, in the event of a campaign, may be sufficient to meet the waste on service of so extended an army, whilst measures have been taken, which will enable it, at no distant period, completely to arm the whole of the volunteers.—The field train, which was fully adequate in the last war to the force then employed, is, in Great Britain alone, already increased from 346 to 648 pieces of ordnance, completely appointed, and brigaded under experienced officers. The horse attached to the same have been increased from 3,300 to 5,900, and the drivers from 1,400 to 3,000. The quantity of moveable ammunition with each gun has also been nearly doubled. The made-up ammunition for small arms, both distributed and in store, has been increased even in a greater degree, and the general provision of stores in all the other branches is equally abundant. Corresponding exertions have been made for the

service of Ireland.—I have thus detailed to the Committee the actual state of defence, in which the country has been placed, during the first seven months of the war. Looking to the aggregate, in army, navy, and ordnance, I venture to put it to the feelings of the Committee, whether his Majesty's ministers have slept upon their post or failed in their duty to the public. I am not disposed to contrast what has been done with the result of any former exertions made in any former war, for I am perfectly ready to admit that the exigency is as unexampled as the facilities of every description which the government has experienced from the nation; but I am desirous of putting it fairly to the Committee (admitting the extent of our resources, and the disposition to place them at the disposal of government, which perhaps never existed in an equal degree at any former period) whether they have not been called forth with diligence, with rapidity, and with effect. I may, without presumption speak with the less reserve upon this subject, as the department entrusted to my care, although it subjects me to an equal share of responsibility with the rest of my colleagues, entitles me certainly to no participation in the praise which belongs to the successful execution of those measures. I have therefore felt myself called upon, in justice towards the persons who preside, at this important crisis, over the great military departments of the King's government, to state what I have done, and thereby to discharge a debt of gratitude, which I owe to them, in common with the country.—Having said thus much on the past military system and measures of the King's government, I should not satisfy either my own feelings or discharge the duty which I owe to the public, if I did not express those sentiments with respect to the future, which are deeply impressed on my own mind; and first, as to the improvement of the force now in existence, and in particular, of the volunteers. Although unprepared at this moment to express any opinion upon the detailed suggestions, which have fallen from my right hon. friend (Mr. Pitt) yet I have no hesitation in concurring with him as a general principle, in the expediency of improving, as far as may be consistent with a reasonable attention to economy, the discipline and efficiency of these corps. I also concur entirely with my right hon. friend in opinion, that it is not the apparent abandonment by the enemy of their menaces of invasion, or even the failure

of any attempt which they may make upon our coast, which should induce us to relax in the vigilance and exertions, to which alone, in times like these, the safety of the country can in prudence be entrusted. Were even a peace of that description, which in wisdom we ought to conclude, within our immediate reach (and that such a peace may yet be very remote, who will be so sanguine as to deny ?) we have seen enough of the temper and spirit of the councils which pervade the rest of Europe ; we have had such experience of the age in which we live, as can leave us no alternative in true wisdom, but to place the security of these realms, in peace, as in war, upon such a basis of internal strength, as shall for ever lay the question of invasion at rest. To such a system alone can we look for the preservation of peace itself. The liberties which have descended to us from our ancestors, and the unexampled and accumulating prosperity which has crowned our own labours and industry, whilst they furnish us with the most ample means of providing for the public safety, have already drawn, and will continue to draw upon us the jealousy and malignity of the enemy. Feelings of this nature can only be met and controuled by demonstrating to him, that our strength, whether in peace or in war, is such as to render his views hopeless. He may then perhaps learn to respect what he cannot hope to destroy. He may be the more disposed to leave us at peace, when he is taught how little he can effect in war. Whatever may be the exertions, and whatever may be the sacrifices connected with such a course of policy, these the sound sense and persevering character of the British nation will, I am confident, prepare them cheerfully to encounter. They will, for their own tranquillity, as well as for their own safety, determine to be no less distinguished in arms, than in commerce and in freedom. The public safety must henceforward be confided to the manly energies of the country ; and we may then hope that the British oak will continue to flourish for ages to come, a proud monument, that as a nation we have had the virtue to defend those blessings, which under the favour of Providence we so eminently enjoy.

Mr. Fox.—I do not rise, Sir, to enter into a discussion of all the points that have this night been touched upon in the course of the debate ; they are all, no doubt, of high importance, and deserve a distinct and full consideration. But I shall now abstain, as much as possible, from every

topic that is not necessarily connected with the subject more immediately before the Committee. I shall first, however, make a few observations on the gloomy presages, the melancholy descriptions, with which the noble lord who just sat down, has thought proper to conclude his speech. The noble lord has stated, that, in his opinion, the present war is likely to have a long continuance, and every body knows how much of the wishes and designs of men enter into the composition of their opinions ; however, he has argued, as if the expenditure of the country must be increased, just in proportion to the degree of prosperity which it may at any time enjoy, and that our prosperity renders it necessary for us to become a military nation ; in a word, that the present military arrangements are to be permanent, and that they are to “ grow with our growth, and strengthen with our strength,” with all the expense and incumbrances that accompany them. Of this, according to the noble lord, our prosperity is the cause ; if so, then our prosperity is productive of a great misfortune ; but I shall not dwell longer on this singular opinion, farther than to say, that it holds out a very afflicting prospect to the country. A right hon. gent. under the gallery (Mr. Pitt) has stated, that we should not mix any other consideration with the business of this night, and that we are not to advert to the past, but to take care for the future, and vote the supply, without adverting to the use that has been made of former grants for a similar purpose. But I am not of the same opinion with that right hon. gent., that a retrospect of the past does not form as properly the subject for examination on this day, as any speculation upon or provision for the future ; indeed, I do not see how the latter is to be justly considered, if we put out of our view all recollection of the former. If we determine to forget the past we literally determine not to profit by experience ; but, as I said before, I shall not take the right hon. gentleman’s advice. The noble lord has reviewed the conduct of his colleagues since the last session, but I shall go farther back. I shall refer to the proceedings of ministers at the time the measures which have been commented upon this evening were proposed and discussed. The right hon. gentlemen say this night, in reply to the arguments of the right hon. gent. on the same bench with me (Mr. Windham), with which arguments I most perfectly concur, that their system was at the period I allude to, approved of by Parliament. But even so, is that a fit objection to the disapprobation now expressed of that

system. Since that system originated, the House has had the advantage of experience to judge of its nature and effects, and is that experience in its favour? How shall we form any fair opinion of it, but from that experience; and yet the right hon. gent. under the gallery (Mr. Pitt) would, if his opposition to any retrospect were attended to, entirely preclude us from consulting that criterion. In all points of legislation, it is our obvious duty to consider the mode in which the laws are to be executed; but, in the point which relates to the system now under discussion, this manner of execution is the principal thing. We have heard that the machinery of this system was bad, and certainly, in my opinion, nothing could be worse, except the views which induced the proposition of it. And shall it then be said, that although the machinery has been found, from universal experience, to be so very exceptionable, the system is still to go on, truly, because Parliament, in the course of last session, approved of it, but the period which has since elapsed, has proved that it is not calculated to promote the object ministers profess to have in view, namely, the vigorous prosecution of the war. These remarks I mean principally to apply to the system of the volunteers, which forms the most prominent feature in the present debate, and the question with respect to which has been put on very fair grounds by the right hon. gent. on the same bench with me (Mr. Windham), and with all whose sentiments on the subject I entirely agree. That right hon. gent. stated, that he considered that in the present crisis, the defence of the country would be better consulted, and the attack of the enemy better provided for, by the increase of our regular land force, than by the embodying of so many volunteers. He also stated, that the volunteers were rather so many men withheld from our effective force, than so many added to it. He did not, however, say any such thing as that which was ascribed to him by the noble lord, that the regulars were the only army which he would recommend to be raised in the present situation of affairs, but that the description of troops he would propose to be added to the regular army, would be very different from that which the volunteer system had collected. That the patriotic feeling and the martial ardour which the volunteers have manifested entitled them to the highest praise, no man could doubt; but the sentiment of the right hon. gent. and mine also is, that this ardour might be much better directed, and much better employed in another way. How differently,

however, does this right hon. gent. and the right hon. gent. under the gallery (Mr. Pitt) consider this institution, and the manner in which it may and ought to be used for the public safety. Though the views of both are distinct, yet both agree in thinking the volunteers, according to their present constitution, exceedingly imperfect. The right hon. gent. on the same bench with me does not deny, that even as they now stand, they may be useful, but maintains that a greater degree of utility might be derived from the same men under a different system; that they are not an adequate substitute for the regular army, nor fit to act with them. The right hon. gent. under the gallery considers the volunteers as laying the foundation of a future military association, upon which the country might be able to rely for its defence, in case it should become advisable, in the course of the war, to send all our disposable force out of the country. What! men who, according to the letter of the act, are only required to submit to twenty days discipline in the course of the year, in order to exempt them from being ballotted for the militia, and to shelter them from regular service and martial law, to be reckoned upon as likely to become, in any seasonable time, qualified to supply the place of a regular army, and to have the safety of the country committed to their protection! Really I do not fully understand the meaning of the right hon. gent. on this point. It seems to be his view, that the volunteers are hereafter to be converted into something like a disposable regular force. Such a thing is not within the contemplation of the bill upon which the volunteer system is grounded. I certainly do not so understand it: and I am fully sure that the members of the volunteer associations do not by any means so understand it. I should wish to know the sentiments of his Majesty's ministers upon this question. Last session it was understood that the volunteers were to be drilled only on Sundays, in order that the progress of their discipline should not interfere with their respective avocations. This is a collateral circumstance, but is yet material to the point in view; because, if it were the object of the framers of the bill to make the volunteers, within any reasonable time, convertible into an efficient force, they undoubtedly would, as they ought, to have prescribed that much more time should be devoted to the learning of military discipline: in fact that no time should be lost. But, according to the original principle of the bill, the volunteers were not in any case to go into the army, that is, to enter into

the regular regiments as regular soldiers. I agree with the right hon. gent. under the gallery, that the volunteers should be allowed pay for such days as they are called upon to attend drill, for it would be extremely unfair to admit the idea, that industrious men of family should be expected, from patriotism, to devote so much of their time to military service for the public good, without any pecuniary compensation; although I cannot comprehend clearly, and where I can comprehend cannot approve, the other remarks he made upon the subject. I should be glad indeed, to hear in what light those remarks are regarded by ministers, by whom the generality of the observations of the right hon. gent. on the same bench with me (Mr. Windham) seem to be quite misconceived; and I am the more anxious that those observations should be clearly represented, as they happen to be so expressive of the opinions that I myself hold. The right hon. gent. did not say, as the noble lord stated and argued upon, that the volunteers formed a force that was locked up from the public use; but that many of those who might have composed the necessary increase of the regular army were locked up in the institution; and so they are, by the exemptions which volunteers enjoyed from being balloted for the militia or the army of reserve. This was the complaint of the right hon. gent., and it is mine. Another right hon. gent. on the same bench with me (Mr. T. Grenville) has observed, that no recruits are likely to enter into the army from the volunteer corps. It does not appear to me desirable that such a thing should be sought for. I hope it can never be in the contemplation of any man to use any compulsion for such purposes, towards those who have entered into volunteer corps, under the express understanding which the bill contains. The honour of the country, and the character of the legislature, forbid it. I trust that in no event will an attempt be made to seduce the volunteers to enlist, because such an attempt would be a violation of the terms upon which they became volunteers; and I am pretty sure, that no man has entered into these associations, under the idea, that he was at any time to be transferred to a regular regiment; and from the rank in life which the generality of the volunteers hold, any effort to recruit the army from among them would be attended with very inconsiderable success, if any. Indeed, I do not at all like the idea, as it is inconsistent with the nature of the engagements as they understood it upon entering into the volunteer corps. Whatever I may think of the insti-

tution, I wish the members of it to be treated with the utmost respect and attention, as I most sincerely applaud the zeal by which they are actuated; but I can never persuade myself to believe, that they are ever likely to answer the expectations of the right hon. gent. under the gallery, even if they were to be drilled 50 days in the year, as the right hon. gent. desired. In what time, I would ask, considering the ordinary habits of the volunteer corps, would they be capable of filling the place which the right hon. gent. would assign them? Certainly not in the next year or the following. Would it be prudent to place the safety of the country under the protection, at any time of war, of a body of volunteers not subject to martial law, nor inured to military discipline? If the rumour of invasion, which, by the by, I never thought so likely to be attempted, and if attempted not so practicable as most people seem to imagine, were to blow over, would the right hon. gent. under the gallery, or any other gentleman, venture to advise the sending of our regular army on any foreign expedition, and depend entirely on the volunteers for our safety against any attack of the enemy on our coast? If in such a case invasion should be actually undertaken, there would, I think, be serious ground for apprehension and alarm. From these considerations I deduce an opinion correspondent to that of the right hon. gent. on the same bench with me, that the machinery of the volunteer system is bad; and that the present system is never likely to produce such a force, even with the aid of that right hon. gentleman's (Mr. Pitt) utmost ability, as he professes to entertain a hope of. I am persuaded, that the volunteers will not answer to act with the regular army in the field of battle, opposed to the enemy's troops as they are at present constructed, nor to form the ground work of such a force as the right hon. gent. under the gallery has alluded to. I should have no objection to a general arming of the people under any circumstances when the country was in danger. But the volunteers, in the light which I view them, cannot be considered as an arming of the people. If they are to be so considered they are in numbers quite too weak: but if they are to be regarded as the foundation of a future army, as the right hon. gent. under the gallery has hinted, they are too large. For the latter purpose 400,000 men would be too much, and for the former one million of men would not be very considerable. Therefore, in either case, the volunteer system is unsuitable. It struck me as somewhat strange

in the noble lord's description of the forces of the country, that he never stated the precise amount of the regular army, as contradistinguished to the militia. Why this was not told, I cannot say; but no doubt it was not, because they were so numerous that they could not be counted. The volunteers seemed to be the favourite subject of the noble lord's description, enumeration, and praise. No doubt the volunteers themselves are justly entitled to applause; but I must say, that the character of the country is not advanced by the frequent repetition of such applause. What, was the House to feel so much elated as if it were matter of wonder that when the country was declared in danger, the people of England were emulous to step forward and defend their homes against a French invader? In such a crisis they had stood forth as was to be expected, and in such numbers that ministers thought proper to resist their increase, and yet they were not likely to afford all the utility of which, otherwise constituted, they would have been capable; what a melancholy reflection!—Among the other objections of the right hon. gent. on the same bench with me, is that which he professed to the manner of the volunteer clothing, an objection of which I also approve: and by those who have commented upon it, I think it has been put on a very wrong footing. I do not like giving men red coats merely to give them the appearance of soldiers, without the material ingredients necessary to form such characters. When I hear ministers talking of the propriety of dressing the volunteers in military uniforms, I ask, do they mean merely that the French troops should take them for soldiers? As masked batteries are used in war, perhaps you mean to fight the French in masquerade? or do you mean to hold out the volunteers as mere targets to be fired at? You might make use of them in various other ways, but you destroy their utility by attempting to make them soldiers. No man will think me apt to favour any system opposite to civil liberty; but yet I cannot help saying, that nothing appears to me more absurd, than the idea of making men effective soldiers for the resistance or attack of an effective regular army, without martial law or military discipline. By this project of the volunteers you send men to impede the movements of your regular force, which men might be employed most usefully to annoy the enemy in various ways, to protect the villages, in fact, by other means to defend the invaded against the invader; but the battle in the field with the troops of the invader must be fought by your regular army;

and victory to our arms, in such a contest will, I hope and trust, ever be the result. The prospect of victory to us indeed, is strengthened by the various advantages which always present themselves to the invaded country. Upon these advantages independently of the gallantry of our regular troops, we reckon with just grounds of confidence, if we could look to the active assistance of an armed peasantry; but where are they to be found—they are absorbed in the volunteers! What I would wish is, to see all men in their proper places, the soldier in the army, the peasant in the country, and the people throughout in that situation where they could be employed each in his proper department.—It may be observed, that it is inconsistent in me, who last year approved of the reduction of the regular army, now to call for its increase; but the times, it is to be recollected, are somewhat different; we were last year at peace, and whether I may be considered "nature's fool," or the Chancellor of the Exchequer's, I certainly did think that peace would continue; and at the commencement of the war, I stated very fully, the reasons, why I thought it might with proper management, and ought to be preserved; but if I was "nature's fool" in thinking the peace of Amiens likely to continue, the Chancellor of the Exchequer certainly took a great deal of pains, gave many flattering descriptions, and used all the arguments in his power to confirm me in my folly. Under the influence, therefore, of that folly, I recommended the decrease of our armed force at the commencement of the last sessions.—With the hope expressed by the right hon. gent. under the gallery, I heartily join, that we shall not long confine ourselves to mere defensive war; that so soon as circumstances favour the project, we shall proceed upon vigorous offensive war; that we shall not always limit our glory to the mere security of our own country; and that we shall not suffer ourselves, according to the old observation, "to be swallowed up in the channel." But what description of offensive operations does the right hon. gent. deem practicable with the present construction of our armed force? If ever the invasion of Ireland were attempted by the enemy, and that they actually landed a considerable force, would he feel it safe to send any material proportion of our regular army to that country leaving England to the defence of the Volunteers? I for myself, should deprecate any such idea. I beg to be understood distinctly as meaning no disrespect whatever, in what I have observed, to the individuals who compose the Volunteer Corps, who are

deserving, I am confident, of all the regard I feel for their motives. I nevertheless think, that no abilities can possibly turn the Volunteer Corps into a regular army. Now we recommend another mode; augment your regular army. In other cases, when men are compelled to do something in haste, they don't reason like our ministers. When you want something done in a hurry, you don't set about teaching the whole art or science. If you wanted to take a servant with you abroad, and would teach him a few words of a foreign language, that he might know how to order your supper, or take care of your horses, or enquire his way—suppose it was the Latin language—would you give him two or three ordinary words, such as bread, beer, &c. or send him to Eton to learn his *propria quæ maribus*? Those who know me, know that I have a very great respect for the study of grammar, and that is certainly the way to make a man a scholar, though not to teach him readily to do a few necessary things. Now, what are you doing? What is the first thing for a soldier? Why to aim and fire. But you are tutoring men into all the punctilios of the parade, making them hold up their bodies and turn out their toes, all proper enough when there is time for it. Remember, that if the Volunteers are wanted in Dec. or Jan. so they were in Aug. or Sept. But, in September, when we were told to expect the French, how many of them had never fired a gun (the case with a great many of the English peasantry, &c.) and still fewer knew how to clean it, and to take care of it? That was your case then. But if ministers were so miserably ill prepared in Aug. last, I confess I am obliged to suspect they now are proportionably so. You have been teaching the Volunteers a variety of matters that some of the best writers on military affairs (Marshal Saxe for example) consider as trifles—evolutions which had better be avoided in action. We say the Volunteers compose a main part of our national defence, and that they consist of the greater part of the young and active men. Now I want this description of persons for two other purposes; first for the regular army, and secondly for the armed nation, not for a sort of half army, that you are to put on the top of a hill, to frighten the enemy if he should dare to land. An hon. friend of mine (Mr. Sheridan) at a late public meeting, did me the honour to compliment me as being a private in one of these Corps. No doubt his motive was kind in toasting my name as a private in the Chertsey Corps; but I am obliged to decline the honour he intended me, for this plain

reason, that I never was a private in that Corps; nor will I become one in any Corps, because I will not undertake a situation, the duties of which I am not competent to perform; my age disqualifies me for it; I could not endure the fatigues of a soldier's life; though, I must confess, I have seen many gentlemen worse looking than myself, parading in the utmost pomp of military array. It may be said, that the influence of example ought to be considered, and probably, from that consideration, most of his Majesty's ministers have become Volunteers. But, what kind of example are they likely to give? Why, if the French should invade this country, they would immediately desert; for they must either desert their offices or the Volunteer Corps, and it is easy to judge what choice they would make. No doubt they would, previous to their desertion, apologise to the Corps they might belong to, that a necessary attendance at their ministerial duties obliged them to depart. And what would be the effect of such apologies on the different Corps? Why this, that it would be a precedent to justify the desertion of every other Volunteer, who could assign any plausible reason of pressing business, &c. I see no good example, nor any public spirit in such things. This vaunted influence of example, however, is quite of a piece with the theatrical ostentatious foppery of the Volunteer system, which seems only fit for nothing but to be put on the top of a hill to be looked at. It is quite a different kind of thing when a gentleman puts himself at the head of any Corps, where he can be of use. For instance, the right hon. gent. who opened the debate (Mr. Windham), is, I find, a Volunteer Officer in his own county, where, from local circumstances, he probably may be of more use than any other person, or in any other way.—As to the affair of the exemptions, it is the crudest thing I ever heard of. I thought I could see a great deal of regret in the sec. of state's speech on that point. But his reason is truly curious. He says, 'Why did not you all tell me of it?' It's all your own fault. You were all placed here to watch me, and you said nothing.' A great number of Volunteers, as has been observed, were enrolled without any exemption whatever. There were several parishes, where people entered into subscriptions to provide for the Army of Reserve. Substitutes have risen to an enormous price, frequently to 50*l*. Parishes cannot get them. Poor men, who never were Volunteers, who cannot afford it, are too old, or perhaps infirm, insure; by and by, comes another ballot, till the parish pays off its whole debt, as the

case is in many parishes in the county where I live.—As to the arms: the ordnance, it is said, had as many as could be expected. I am not quite of that opinion; it might have been so in former times, but in a modern view of the business, I say, with the foresight ministers say they had of the designs of the enemy, it ought to have been better stored. They concluded their peace would not last; we, who were "Nature's fools," and mere idiots, could not know that. But did they provide for war? My credulity must be greater than they thought it, before I can bring myself to believe it. But did they think of a war with France without the threat of attempting an invasion? It seems hardly possible. It was, therefore, necessary to guard against it. I say, that in such case, they must have seen the necessity of providing more than 300,000 muskets. Why they should seem so disposed to boast of the state of the country, I don't know, unless it be that they are themselves really surprised at their own exertions. They have been quite astonished; and, looking round on one another, 'Oh,' say they, 'who could have thought it? We never could have imagined that we were capable of such exertions.' Of the country it was impossible for them to think meanly: nor do I see why any man should be surprised or astonished to see Englishmen coming forward manfully to defend themselves. What they might think of themselves is another matter; if they foresaw the danger, there could be no impediment to foreseeing the want of arms. I do hope, that some things have lately happened to render that danger less. I say, that if Admiral Cornwallis could, during the week parliament met, lay off Brest with his fleet, and effectually blockade that port, he has materially lessened the danger, and has gained laurels as great almost as ever were gained by a victory. The utmost degree of praise is due to that gallant commander for his skill and bravery in this most important affair, which I think of the highest consequence to the country. I certainly, however, by no means say, that on that account we ought to relax at all in our defensive preparations. But here perhaps I may be biassed. Always thinking an invasion attended with many difficulties, and particularly under these circumstances, but deeming it equally necessary to be fully on our guard against it; I say, I may be biassed, but I can't help saying, go on in your preparations, but let them be such as may be most speedily converted into the means of offensive warfare, and if I gave an additional vote to night, it should be to the regular army.—Now, Sir,

having stated my difficulties as to the converting the Volunteer Corps into a foundation for the regular army, I wish to say a word as to their duration, more particularly as the noble lord spoke of them as not being intended for temporary purposes. Now suppose, whether justly or unjustly, the war should become, in any respect, unpopular, if you should exact from the Volunteers nothing but what is perfectly compatible with their other necessary pursuits of life, they will go on very well; but I think, that on the petty pay allowed them, should certain circumstances, unforeseen at present, arise, the keeping of them up, on their present footing, may not be impossible, but I will say improbable. The noble lord talked of making us a military nation. I do not see the matter exactly in the same light with him; but I have no objection to see the nation more military in its character even in time of peace, so far as that every class of persons should be better skilled in the use of arms; peasants, artisans, and commercial men, &c. This would be of considerable advantage to the country. But we are asked, how else are the people to be employed in the public service? Why, the secretary at war says, he is not a military man. Modesty is a good quality. But I humbly think, that at a time when the country is threatened with a formidable invasion, and we are raising such immense forces to oppose it, the secretary at war should be somewhat of a military man. But he refers to general officers. Every general officer, I think, will tell him, that the best way of arming the people, is by training them to their proper uses.—I cannot help repeating the opinion which I gave last session, and upon which a motion was ineffectually made in this house; namely, that there should be a responsible military authority, to which the parliament and the people might look for the whole conduct of the army department. I have great personal respect for H. R. H. the Commander in Chief, but I am persuaded, from my personal knowledge of his character, that he would not be pleased with the flattery, that he is himself capable of the very difficult task of governing this department. It requires, above all, that the responsibility should be clear and positive. I may be allowed to say, that there is an obstacle in his high birth to the responsibility which belongs to his situation. there is a delicacy in questioning the measures of a personage of his illustrious rank, which deters men in general from the duty of calling him to account. It is not too much to say, that all the arrangements of the mili-

tary system for the last summer have been unsteady, vacillating, and capricious. Early in the summer a staff was appointed, which, to say no worse of it, gave considerable surprise to military men. Generals were appointed to the command of districts, who no doubt had just pretensions to employment, but men were disposed to enquire why others of the greatest experience, gallantry and distinction were omitted! Names were missed, that in a situation of the country so critical, ought, in the public opinion, to have been the first thought of. Thus it was conceived that Lord Cornwallis was not so old as to be overlooked; and surely my noble friend, Earl Moira, was not so destitute of activity, zeal, energy, and experience as to be left unemployed. And yet, in the first instance, his name was not to be found. A general promotion, however took place, and this altered the arrangement;—Lord Hutchinson, who had been employed at first, was now put off the staff, and Earl Moira was most properly appointed to the chief command in Scotland—an appointment which gave me the highest satisfaction, as it must do to every one who truly regarded the defence of the country; but why, if the noble earl was proper to be trusted with a great military station in Oct. was he overlooked in May? It was answered to all this, that it was the King's prerogative to change his generals, and that he might change them every day. Most true it is his prerogative, but his ministers are responsible for the exercise of this prerogative capriciously. The country have a right to the employment of the best talents and experience that the army can supply, and the characters of officers are an essential part of the public strength. Men are not to be changed by caprice. Where nothing has happened to alter the circumstances, it betrays a levity inconsistent with the character of a strong and efficient government to change, take officers up and put them down without a reason assigned, or an argument of any kind.—Every part of the service has been left to chance. Even in raising the Army of Reserve, there was the same want of attention. After men had paid 40*l.* or 50*l.* to find a substitute for the Army of Reserve, and the substitute had marched to the appointed rendezvous, he found no one there to receive him. This had happened in many instances, and the substitutes not knowing what to do with themselves or their money, had deserted in post chaises and four. Was there ever an administration so trusted, so supported—so left with almost uncontrolled power as the present—with the spirit of the country raised to the highest enthusiasm—with no party differences to mo-

lest them—with the lords lieutenants of the counties all eager to second their views; and yet what had they done with all this power? Had it not been the chief employment of those lords lieutenants to comprehend the instructions they had received—the explanation of the explanations had occupied almost all their time; and not merely in regard to their signals in Norfolk, but to all their system there had been such a system of confusion, contradiction and vacillation as to make it impossible for the proper officers to understand what they were to do. I am speaking now of their military system, not of their boasted income act, of which we shall hear enough hereafter.—Now I am speaking on the general subject of ministerial changes and confusion, I am led to mention a circumstance respecting a near relation of mine (General Fox), concerning whom the conduct of government has been such as I cannot comprehend. He was sent, after the commencement of the war, to a very high and important command (in Ireland); an appointment at which I felt much more of anxiety than of pleasure, notwithstanding the knowledge I had of his character. A disturbance broke out in Dublin on the 23d of July, in which Lord Kilwarden was murdered. It excited universal astonishment, and in a few days he was no longer commander in chief. I may be told, indeed, that his departure thence proceeded from his own request; but from all I have been able to learn upon the subject, a wish on the part of the civil government of Ireland was expressed, that he should be recalled. After this, there was no man of spirit but would say, "I will no longer stay in your way, since you wish my removal." When he comes over here, he is immediately entrusted with the high and honourable command of a district near the metropolis, a clear proof that ministers did not think ill of his conduct. But why then was he recalled? Because, it seems, it was the wish of the Irish civil government. I say, that this circumstance happening so very soon after the 23d of July, who would not feel themselves justified in saying that it was in consequence of misconduct? Did both parties, the civil power, and the commander in chief, act perfectly well? How? By getting intelligence? By following up that intelligence? Was it true that the lord lieutenant instructed the commander in chief, and then withdrew to the Phoenix Park, a few hours before Lord Kilwarden was murdered? Nothing that I can see but a surprise, a total and complete surprise, can justify the Irish government in that affair,

or they must be a sort of accomplices in the murder of Lord Kilwarden. It ought to be publicly known, that whatever intimation was given to the commander in chief, was given with an idea that it was not to be relied upon. Not even the Lord Mayor knew any thing of it: and, when it is alleged (pitiful excuse!) with great formality, that the superintendant magistrate of the city of Dublin was informed of it, pray was he directed to communicate it to the Lord Mayor? If he was, he did not execute his orders. Was there any one civil magistrate active on the occasion? And yet it was afterwards insinuated, that blame lay where there was not the smallest reason to lay it, and the lord lieut. wishes for a new appointment of the commandership in chief. I have heard of other and very different reasons. The press in Ireland, though not so much enslaved as at Paris, is, I believe, not so unshackled as it is here, and is not very likely to convey to the world that which is thought to be disagreeable at the castle. Well, Sir; from this press, a paragraph has made its appearance, stating, "that the commander in chief was the brother to Mr. Charles Fox, of the English House of Commons, that he was first cousin to the Duke of Leinster, and, of course, was related to the late Lord *Edward Fitzgerald*." This, Sir, was a strange offence, if, indeed, it was an offence at all. No man of General Fox's rank has, I believe, mixed less, at any time, in the politics of the day. What could be the true cause of his recel, I know not; for I, who am no judge of military matters, must, setting aside feelings of relationship, consider him to be a good officer, after his recent appointment. What, then, was it that induced the lord lieut. and his Majesty's ministers to act with such unexampled, such unaccountable caprice? I say there must have been some scandalous inattention at the castle. Strange conduct! They are actuated only by the dread of giving alarm. From morning till night they do not seem afraid of riot or murder, but of giving alarm. I, for my part, wish the citizens of Dublin had been alarmed, and then there might have been some safety. But why all this fear of alarm? Why, but because there was a charm which they feared would be broken. Why, but because the friends of government had been crying out here last spring—"All's safe! All's well!" and then were afraid of the idea of danger. "This will spoil all our story, and we shall never be believed again. If the danger goes off we are safe. There has been no alarm; if danger breaks

out we must run the risk; but we will take our chance for it."—There is another subject of a still higher nature, on which I feel it my duty to say a few words; I mean, the situation of the Heir Apparent of the Crown. Last session, we understood, he had made very handsome offers of his services to government. Not only were they then not accepted, but nothing since, it appears, has been done to soothe his mind, or carry into effect his liberal and honourable offer. I shall hear, that this matter is dependant on the prerogative of the Crown. Who questions it? But are we to understand from that, that the King's will is everything, and the public opinion nothing? This may be very good doctrine, but I must say I am too old to learn it. I should think this a subject on which I may claim a right to observe, because I consider the active services of the Prince of Wales of great importance in our present situation, for exciting the spirit of the country, and, therefore, as being a material part of the public defence. I hope, and indeed am inclined to think, that there is as much loyalty in this country as there ever was at any former period. To all loyal persons, must it not be grateful to see the Heir Apparent actively employed in the contest, and sharing, with the public at large, in the danger and in the glory of defending the country? The danger, notwithstanding my confidence in our success, may God forbid! But are you to be justified in omitting to use such material means? He has been long in the army. It was natural for him to say—"My situation in society is such, that rank is an inferior consideration; whether I am colonel or general, is of little importance." But at *present*, is not the case quite different? "If France lands her armies on our shores, all your other brothers in the army shall have a high command; but you, under the colour of saving you from danger, shall be deprived of any glorious opportunity." Look at his situation! At the head of the regiment he commands—but who thinks that to be colonel of a regiment of light horse, is a situation, in times like these, fit for the Prince of Wales? I can easily imagine, that such is the frame of some men's minds, that they could reconcile themselves to the idea of shutting him up like an Eastern Monarch; but I am sure his mere colonelcy is what no man here will say is a situation becoming him. I cannot enter into motives. I am sure the consequences will be honourable to the Prince of Wales, and not so to those who have advised his Majesty to refuse his offer.

They may by such advice take away from him an opportunity of rendering himself popular, and becoming one of the most beloved princes in our history. Why this is not desirable, I really cannot understand. We, however, have a right to state to ministers our opinions upon a subject to which we may think the interests of the public are deeply concerned, and which certainly involves topics peculiarly grateful to the feelings of the Prince of Wales.—I hope, Sir, that this debate will have a good effect upon the public mind; and that they will see the Parliament disposed to look, that ministers do justice to their energies, and to the burthens they cheerfully bear: for their voluntary expenses are as real a burthen as their taxes. I hope the people will see that we are ready to do what is owing to their love of freedom, their public spirit, and their zeal and bravery in the public cause.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer.—I join with my noble friend (Lord Castlereagh) in the necessity of this country redoubling her energies, in consequence of the envy and immoderate ambition of the enemy with whom we are now seriously contending. It is unquestionably true, that it is a melancholy consideration, that our present necessity is created not by our wealth and our freedom, but by the envy and hatred that wealth and that freedom have excited in the breast of our enemy. The hon. gent. who spoke last, I was happy to hear express his strong conviction of the necessity of putting forth all the energies of this great country. I have now risen, Sir, chiefly to make a few remarks on his wish to know what was the view government have of the character of our numerous and patriotic volunteers. One right hon. gent. dislikes to see them in regimentals; he wishes them not to look like soldiers, and to wear no uniforms. Another right hon. gent. wishes to see them approximated much nearer to regular soldiers. My opinion, Sir, inclines much more to the latter right hon. gentleman's suggestion. I do wish to maintain that force in its strength, and render it available to all the great purposes for which it was instituted. But I wish it to be considered, that upon the present system on which our volunteer strength has grown up and flourished, there is such a hearty and universal co-operation and affection among the various corps, that it might be very unwise to try any sudden changes. The hon. gent. who spoke last says, we should increase the regular force, and that my noble Friend, in his statements, has blended the accounts of the forces in England and Ireland. I am

confident that there is no wish in government to conceal any information on this important subject. I am very willing to relieve the minds of any persons who want to be satisfied upon it. I believe I state accurately, when I say that the whole regular force is 69,000 men, of infantry, cavalry, and artillery, disposable to any part of the world; which added to the militia, make up 180,000 men, exclusive of 27,000 of the army of reserve, not yet incorporated with the line, and 410,000 volunteers. I hope, after this statement, I shall not hear again that we have totally destroyed the regular army; but I am ready to concur in expressing an earnest wish, that this great force should be augmented; and I have the satisfaction to see, that the system has succeeded in augmenting the regular force, in a more effectual way, than at any time previously, except by the offers of the militia last war. In ten weeks 7,500 had volunteered for general service; and notwithstanding the interruption of recruiting, the diminution of number was but a third: in all, not more than 1,500 for the whole year. What I regret exceedingly is, that gentlemen should have so much underrated the volunteers; as fit only to protect villages and carry provisions: and as being taught matters not conducive to the species of utility within their reach. I have a great opinion of the authority of that hon. gent. and of the right hon. gent. on the same bench; but in military matters, I think I must prefer that of Lord Moira, whom the hon. gent. has so deservedly praised, now commander in chief in Scotland, who, addressing the Edinburgh volunteers, says, he would head them confidently against any foe; and of Lord Cathcart, the present commander in chief in Ireland. Nothing requires greater caution or more delicacy than the adoption of any new system in regard to the volunteers. I deprecate any attempts that may destroy that unanimity and cordiality that at present happily subsist among all ranks. I am afraid to draw the string too tight. Another hon. gent. (Mr. Grenville) thinks we should have had ten times the number of volunteers. Now, of the male population from 18 to 60, I apprehend one-fourth to be actually under arms. It is true, when the bill was first brought in, nothing was said about the limitation, but afterwards a number was stated, much below the present number of volunteers, namely, three-fourths of the first class.—And now, Sir, have ministers done their duty to the public? I readily grant that no administration ever received more cordial support from the public, in all measures calcu-

lated to promote the public welfare; and we should indeed be without excuse, were we deserving of the censures we have received.—The right hon. gent. has referred to the Treaty of Amiens, and says, then we ought to have made out our plan for keeping up the army. Whenever I hear the assertion of our reducing the army made, I must contradict it. None but a body of 7,000, partly invalids, were reduced; but of all the regular infantry of the country, only 3,000. I aver that, subsequently to that treaty, I thought that peace would last, but that its duration would be entirely dependent on our strong establishment, and the consciousness of our own security. The right hon. gent. spoke of our “thread” of naval defence; but surely the observation of the hon. member opposite to me, confutes that remark by his praise of the fleet off Brest.—Mr. Addington, after several remarks, noticed the project of a responsible military council. Many respectable persons wished for such an establishment when it was first proposed, who have now almost generally changed their sentiments. It would lay the foundation of weakness, and destroy all hope of distinction, all just and generous responsibility, which H. R. H. the Duke of York charges on himself, and would produce distraction and imbecility.—But there was another subject of still greater delicacy, to which the hon. gent. referred; that of the first subject of the realm not being in a situation which he thought due to his exalted rank, and which H. R. H. himself desires. When this subject was before mentioned, I stated that no authority short of his Majesty’s commands, or the joint authority of this House, should compel me to say one word on that subject. Since that, nothing has intervened. But I really cannot account for the silence of the hon. gent. on this subject, last war. Nothing, however, shall make me change, but what I have described.—As to the charges of vacillation and confusion, they are utterly unfounded. With respect to the gallant officer alluded to, late commander in chief in Ireland, I see no complaint against General Fox; the best proof of which, is his subsequent appointment. Sir R. Abercrombie returned, it is true, from Ireland, but that left no discredit on that brave general. Nothing but ignorance of the subject could induce a gentleman of the hon. member’s candour and sagacity, to attach any blame to the Irish civil or military government. All the inculpations of persons in either department, I aver, are unfounded, and if enquiry can be made, it will redound to

their honour.—Mr. Addington concluded with expressing his hope that the proposition, of which notice had been given, might not be pressed. He was sure the proposition came from one who was a sincere friend to the volunteer system, and he felt the force of many remarks which had been made. As to the exemptions, a right hon. friend of his would bring in a bill on that subject.

Mr. Fox.—With respect to the impenetrable silence of the right hon. gent., unless on condition of his Majesty’s command, it might be well, perhaps, if he had extended that discretion to the case of Ireland also. He is asked, if the government of Ireland did not express a wish for the recall of the commander in chief. He does not say, I never knew of such a wish, but “I see no complaint against General Fox.” This is no answer whatever, and the right hon. gent. had better have wrapped himself up in state silence, than have made any such reply. To evade is next to saying nothing. He is silent as to the Prince of Wales; as to the affairs of Ireland he evades the question. How is it possible the Lord Lieut., I again repeat, could at such a moment wish the recall of the commander in chief, and not cast a censure on him? It could not be. I assert that government here, when they knew the disposition and opinion of the government of Ireland, did not take proper means to investigate the cause of their wish, and ascertain where the blame, in fact, existed. In such a state of the case it is trifling to say no censure is implied. It is not consistent with common sense to exact martial law and suspend the Habeas Corpus Act, for a riot so contemptible, as the rising of the 23d of July was now represented. In the nature of things it cannot be that ministers are sincere on that point; and if the rising be once serious blame must attach somewhere.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer*.—I can only repeat on that subject what was said upon it by a right hon. Friend near me (Mr. Yorke) when the debate relative to those bills took place. If the right hon. gent. did not then chuse to attend in his place, he has no right now to call on the subject pending another discussion.

Mr. *Secretary Yorke*.—“Sir; the unprovoked way in which the right hon. gent. (Mr. Fox) has thought proper to attack a noble relative of mine, and the unusual terms of asperity he has used, makes it necessary for me to say a few words. Upon the subject of Ireland, I say, let every one come forward and explain what he knows: then “*Fiut justitia ruat Cælum.*” If the right hon. gent. means, in the exculpation of the

commander in chief, to attach blame to the civil government of Ireland, then must I oppose his object. The facts of the case are nearly as follows. No information was in possession of the government of Ireland of any intention of a rising being near, till the explosion of the powder mill on the 18th of July. Of this event intelligence was sent in a letter to the commander in chief. He had left Dublin on a military tour, and did not receive it till his return on the 20th. Next day, the 21st, a gentleman waited on government to say, from certain appearances among his men, he conjectured a rising would take place the next day. On the 22d he came again, saying all appearances of commotion had since subsided, and that he thought he was wrong in his ideas yesterday. He returned on the 23d, and declared his conviction that now in earnest it was about to break out. Other circumstances and intelligence concurring, the government of Ireland was convinced of the fact. The Lord Lieutenant who was at the Phoenix Park, was sent for, and, calling on the commander in chief, they came to the castle in his coach together. Here the officers of state were assembled, and the communication was made by the respective officers in the presence of the commander in chief and Lord Lieutenant. The opinion, as to a rise that day, and the grounds of them; were thought not to be of importance, and it is justice to say, government did not know of the dépôt or intended rising in other parts of Ireland. It certainly was not thought serious; but who would not have thought, on this statement, that the commander in chief would have taken every necessary precaution? I will ask you, if, on this intelligence, known equally to both, it was not more the office of the commander in chief to warn his officers than the Lord Lieutenant? Without exciting alarm he might at evening parade have told the officers and men not to stay from quarters that night. If he did not, surely it was not the fault of the Lord Lieutenant. So, if ammunition was wanted, that was not the fault of the Lord Lieutenant. It was with the commandant of the place as it would be here in London or any other town. As well might Gen. Fox be said to be an accomplice in the death of Col. Brown, for not warning that officer, though only 500 yards from his own house, of the rising, as the civil government of Ireland be called accomplices in the murder of Lord Kilwarden, because they had not taken precautions they did not deem necessary. It is known I was very glad on the appointment of the late commander in chief, and always thought highly of him. After the events of

the 23d of July, I believe the government of Ireland did not make any official application for the removal of the commander in chief; but a coolness took place between the Lord Lieutenant and him, which shewed that a longer continuation together would not be proper. In fact, after absenting himself some days from the castle, the commander in chief gave in his resignation. I will not however disguise, that the Lord Lieut. did think, under all circumstances, that either himself or the commander in chief should withdraw.

Mr. Fox.—In no sense can my observations be considered as an unprovoked attack, as the consideration of the character of general officers arises naturally out of the subject now before the House, and I always thought it right to go into those points. I have some reasons to think, that the government of Ireland was well attached to the commander in chief, and that between him and the Lord Lieut. a perfect good-will subsisted, previous to the events of the 23d. After that period, a coolness arose between them; the abuses which took place, might have arisen from certain rumours, traceable to the castle. As to one, I can say, he conceived the other had spoken of him in a way which he did not deserve, and that he had not been informed, as it was intimated, of the intended rising on the 23d. If he had been so informed, was it not natural the lord mayor would have been told? It is impossible it could be otherwise. I repeat again, that the government of Ireland must have been surprised, or they were accomplices in the death of Lord Kilwarden. In the same situation, I equally should have said the same of the commander in chief. The question is, whether that officer had communicated to him any sufficient ground of alarm, to authorize him to take measures of precaution, and, in particular, to apprise Col. Brown of the risk. What, if it can be proved that the Lord Lieut. gave him orders not to alarm any one! And, as to the steps taken by him, what, if his lordship sent to express his surprise, and said, I suppose, by what you are doing, you must act on some information unknown to me! The letter sent to the commander in chief was not received; so the Lord Lieut. had more ground than he to conceive the extent of the danger. On the existence of a coolness, which compelled the government here to choose between the Lord Lieut. and commander in chief, they did, as was natural, determined for the former; but what I complain of is, that they never instituted any inquiry into the cause of that coolness. It was, however, obvious to common observation, that two such

persons could not originate a misunderstanding on light grounds. This should have been done; they should not have been like the Lord Lieut. fearful of giving alarm; but inquiring into the cause of the coolness, they should, if they found his lordship's insinuation groundless, have given him a reprimand.

Admiral *Berkeley*.—I am sure the right hon. gent. (Mr. Yorke) is above all wish of being misunderstood. Does he mean to say that the commander in chief of Ireland knew and was apprised of the intended rising on the 23d of July.

Mr. *Secretary Yorke*.—I meant to say, that the commander in chief had every opportunity of knowing the information disclosed at the castle, on the morning of the 23d, that the Lord Lieutenant had.

Mr. *Corry*.—As I have been in Dublin since the unfortunate events of the 23rd of July, it may be expected I should say something on this subject, upon which I made it my business when there, to make a minute inquiry. The civil government were apprised of an intended rising on the 23d of July. This clearly appears. In consequence they warned the civil magistrates, at the head of which was the superintendant of Dublin. The mistake is, that officer is unknown here. The lord mayor of Dublin is not like the lord mayor of London. It is not he, but the superintendant who has the charge of the peace. He was informed of the rising, and actually armed, and called out an additional number of peace officers; from this, it is clear, the government of Ireland were not surprised and that they took every step which would be thought essential. The interview at the castle, between the commander in chief and the Lord Lieutenant could be proved. The details of the intelligence were then laid before them, and the civil government had certainly a right to conclude, that the commander in chief had taken every military precaution which the circumstances would warrant. Whether he did or not, or what those precautions might be, I am not prepared to say, as, in fact, I made no inquiry on those subjects. That the conspiracy existed, and that to a dangerous degree, I conceive to be the foundation of the late bills, for continuing martial law, and suspending the operation of the Habeas Corpus Act. With this object, the late insurrection is unconnected. That was, in truth, contemptible. On the confusion of these two circumstances, the former insurrection and present conspiracy, depends all the difference of opinion now and lately expressed: whereas, in fact, there is no inconsistency, no contradiction. The insurrection was contemptible: the conspi-

racy is dangerous. Nothing in what I have here said, I trust, will be construed to the disadvantage of the commander in chief, relative to whose conduct I had no means of inquiry, and never have formed any opinion concerning it.

Lord *de Blaquiere*.—I cannot admit, Sir, that the insurrection on the 23d of July was a matter to be lightly treated. It was, in my opinion, a rank and dangerous rebellion. The castle of Dublin was certainly surprised. A plan was on foot to stop the mail coaches, and if that had taken place, the whole country would have risen. Under these circumstances, I think inquiry should be instituted, for heavy blame must attach somewhere.

The Hon. *C. Hely Hutchinson*.—Sir, upon a question of national defence, and at a moment critical as the present, I feel it to be my duty, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, to trouble you with a very few observations. I give ministers full credit for the exertions they have made in calling forth the strength of the country by the volunteer associations, undoubtedly a force highly constitutional, and although not new in theory, has now, for the first time, been thus extensively adopted. Notwithstanding the firm reliance I place on the zeal and loyalty of the volunteer force, which I doubt not, will in the hour of attack be found highly serviceable and solicitous to encounter every danger, I cannot, at the same time, but lament that ministers have not deemed it advisable to decrease that species of force, and in a very considerable degree to augment the troops of the line; but upon this topic, I purposely refrain at this late hour from enlarging, particularly as it has been already so ably and fully discussed. My principal, indeed, sole object for troubling you at this moment, is in consequence of a subject which has been introduced by an hon. member (Mr. Fox) who has lately spoken. Upon it I have long had a decided opinion. I consider it a subject of great public moment, and I feel that in times like the present, to hesitate to deliver such an opinion, would be to shrink from the discharge of my public duty.—Such is the nature of the contest in which we are involved, so awfully critical the present state of things, so inveterate our foe, so various and formidable his resources, and so unceasing his machinations to destroy us, that it has been found necessary that his Majesty should avail himself of the appearance in arms of almost every description of his subjects; and so serious does his Majesty deem the meditated attack, that he has been graciously pleased to gratify and animate his faithful subjects, by declaring his royal

intention, in the event of invasion, of putting himself at the head of his troops, determined in person to defend the constitution, the laws, the religion, and the liberties of his united empire. At such a crisis, the Prince of Wales, the heir apparent to the crown, the person most interested in the event of this struggle, naturally anxious to share in the danger and the glory of the day, solicits to be placed in a situation where, by his presence, he may contribute to collect thousands round the royal standard; and evince, by his firmness and zeal, the ardour with which he would support the throne of his Sovereign and Father; but in this his ardent hope, and first expectation, he finds himself disappointed! And yet, Sir, we have been but this moment informed by a right hon. gent. (Mr. Pitt) that we must not suffer ourselves to be lulled into a state of security, or to consider this any other than a contest likely to be most durable; and he has even gone so far as to suggest the propriety of our resolving to fashion ourselves into a military nation. With the din of war constantly assailing the ear, and the cry of universal armament being incessant, that the Illustrious Personage alluded to, the most interested, should be the only one prevented from occupying his proper station, appals one with astonishment!!!—Sir; I have ever admired, as the surest foundation of the liberties of these countries, as the most valued right of the subject, and as the most glorious characteristic of the monarchy, that maxim of our constitution, which asserts that the King can do no wrong; the prerogative of the crown (for the wisest purposes) most extensive, seems only to be limited, where it is possible that in its operation it can affect the welfare of the community; the King, as sole executive, and only fountain of honour and of mercy, beholds these his prerogatives upholden by the unqualified approbation of his people. But, Sir, the same spirit of legislation which declared that the prerogative of the crown could not operate to the injury of the subject, has also wisely attached an awful responsibility upon ministers for the fit execution of that prerogative; and, among the various duties incumbent on the members of this House, that of not suffering this responsibility to be evaded, imperiously demands their most watchful attention. I am decidedly of opinion, that the illustrious personage in question, being at this moment appointed to an ostensible command, would bring great additional strength to the public cause, and that ministers in neglecting to advise his Majesty to this measure, are highly censurable.—I cannot conclude without de-

claring, that I give my most unqualified support to the vote now proposed, as I have done to every measure deemed necessary to strengthen and support his Majesty in the present arduous and necessary contest in which he is engaged, and in which I rejoice to perceive he has already received the cordial co-operation of every description of his subjects.

Mr. Pitt and the Chancellor of the Exchequer respectively spoke in explanation, relative to some points which had been discussed in an early part of the debate.—Mr. Windham and the Chancellor of the Exchequer also spoke severally in explanation.—Mr. Pitt, in further explanation observed, that a sufficient number of field officers for the purposes he had mentioned with respect to volunteer corps could without difficulty be obtained. He did not mean persons who should hold that rank at the time of their coming to those corps; there were a number of persons of the rank of captains, of a certain number of years standing, who would be fully competent to the purpose, and would make very respectable field officers.—The questions were then put, on the different resolutions moved by the Sec. at War, as well as those moved by the Sec. of the Ordnance Department, all of which were severally agreed to by the Committee. The House then resumed, and the report was ordered to be received on Monday.—The Committee of Ways and Means, and the other orders of the day were then deferred till Monday, and at 3 o'clock the House adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Saturday, December 10.

The bills on the table were forwarded one stage: and the Curates' relief bill, sugar duty drawback bill, Irish distillery bill, and Irish provision bill, were brought up from the Commons.—Adjourned to Monday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Saturday, December 10.

[MINUTES].—Mr. Hobhouse brought up the report of the committee of supply. The resolutions were agreed to *nem. con.*—Mr. Secretary Yorke presented an abstract of the volunteer corps accepted by his Majesty subsequent to the 10th of August last. Ordered to lie on the table.—Mr. Corry presented the annual petitions and estimates from the Irish charitable institutions. Ordered to lie on the table.—Mr. Corry wished to give notice, that on Monday he would move the

usual grants for those institutions, pursuant to the act of union. After some remarks from the Speaker on the shortness of the notice, it was stated by Mr. Corry, that there was the same interval between the notice and the motion as last year; and by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the sums and services were the same as last year, and every year, as provided for by the articles of union; and, therefore, that the House was already in possession of the subject. On these grounds the notice was allowed to stand.

[VOLUNTEER EXEMPTION BILL.] Mr. *Secretary Yorke* in pursuance of the notice he had given yesterday, rose to move for leave to bring in a bill to explain and amend the acts of 42 and 43 GEO. III. so far as they related to the exemptions to be enjoyed by volunteers. From what he had heard in the House yesterday, and what he had learned from other sources, he knew that much difficulty existed in the interpretation of these acts. It was indeed hardly to be expected, that every person should have read them over, so as to know precisely their provisions in the manner the law required. He therefore thought it right to prefer this bill for the purpose of explaining those acts in that part where explanation was most immediately necessary. The bill which he meant to prefer would go only to regulate the exemptions. There were other points also, he was aware, which required explanation, and it might perhaps be necessary to go into the entire review of the volunteer system, in order to correct and strengthen it; but as this should be done, not hastily, but with mature consideration, he thought it better to defer it till after the recess. The object of the bill he meant to propose would be, first to enable such commanders of corps as had not given in their returns, to give them in now, and to provide that the certificate of such commander should be effectual to secure the benefit of the exemption to the individual. This exemption extended equally to the militia and the army of reserve. The return should specify, whether the men attended with arms and otherwise accounted, so as to be considered as effective; if he attended without arms, there was to be a special return, stating the reason why, and this special return, and the certificates founded upon it, should also give a title to the exemptions. It was extremely advisable, while the exemptions were secured to every person who was entitled to them, to do every thing that could be done to prevent abuses arising from too much relaxation: he thought it necessary to provide that from the 1st of May next, 24 days regular attendance in training and exercise

should be required, to give a title to the exemptions. The former of the acts which the bill would go to explain and amend, being passed in time of peace, required only five days. It would be obvious to the House, that a longer attendance would be necessary in time of war, and particularly in such a war as the present, than in time of peace. He proposed therefore, that 24 days attendance should be required of the infantry, and 12 of the cavalry. The returns would be made three times a year, and therefore 8 days in every four months would be required of the infantry, and four days of the cavalry. He concluded with moving for time to bring in a bill to explain and amend the said acts.

Mr. *Curwen* was sorry the right hon. gent. was not prepared at present with any measures to enforce the continuance of the service of the volunteers. The danger was, that many of them as soon as the present ballot was over, would attend no longer, and thus being lost to the militia and the army of reserve, would be lost also to the volunteer corps. He wished, therefore, that the present measure were coupled with some general regulations for the corps. He thought it wise in ministers to be as saving of the public money as was consistent with the public interests, and the public safety, but at the same time he thought it would be wise to enter on some general plan for the improvement of the volunteer corps. He did not think that the plan proposed last night (by Mr. Pitt) would go down. The volunteer officers were pledged to their corps, to accompany them wherever they should be ordered, and of course they would not like that a field officer should be put over their heads, neither would the appointment of such an officer be agreeable to the volunteers who composed the corps. He thought it would be much better to give serjeant-majors and adjutants in greater numbers, to give a second serjeant, and a corporal, with permanent pay. It was well known that the discipline of the men depended on their having good non-commissioned officers. He was sure too much could not be said of the honourable principles and feelings of the volunteers in general. But though an ignominious discharge from the ranks would have the fullest effect in many instances, it would not in all. He thought it better that intoxication, disorderly, and unsoldier-like conduct, should be punished by a small fine, peremptorily and immediately enforced. He was sure that the effect of this, and some similar regulations would produce a degree of good conduct and emulation, which would

extend with the most beneficial effect to the army and militia, as well as volunteers. Looking to the military face which the country wore at present, every thing should be done to realize the appearance, and if ministers deferred for a time bringing forward such regulations as were necessary to this effect, he hoped it was only to bring them forward in a more systematic and digested form, at no distant period. He wished the House also to bear in mind, that in the country, where several corps were called together from their homes, and from their daily labour, by which most of them subsisted, obliged to give up their usual emoluments, and to live at public houses at an unusual expense, it would be impossible to find men, and unreasonable to expect them without allowing them pay: The additional expense would not be more than ten shillings a man in the year, perhaps not more than five.—The general officer of the district in his attendance at the reviews, and the inspecting field officer on Sundays could guard against any abuses. He considered, that with some advantages of this kind the volunteers would soon be as good a force as any we possessed for defence; that we trust to them with security, and spare our regular forces for foreign expeditions. The spirit of the volunteers was a proof that this reliance could be placed on them, and they were animated with this spirit, because they felt that the contest in which we were engaged was unavoidable.

Mr. *Hiley Addington* was pleased with the bill that was proposed, but at the same time he concurred in the propriety of what had been said by the hon. gent. who had just sat down. He was sure that the plan proposed last night would not do; if it should be compulsory, it would excite discontent; and if it were to be optional, it would be nugatory, as very few would be inclined to avail themselves of it. He believed at present there were only four or five corps in the kingdom that had field officers of such a description. He was sure an adjutant would be a more effective person; and it should be recollected, that five years service in the army was necessary to qualify those adjutants.—But whether those adjutants could be expected to attend drills 84 days without a larger allowance? It was impossible for day-labourers of which description of men the greater number of country corps consisted; that which he had the honour to command consisted of them exclusively, to attend without pay. He had taken upon himself the risk of having his corps imperfect from the want of an officer of that descrip-

tion recommended by the hon. gent. Serjeant-majors, who he thought with the hon. gent. were absolutely necessary, were never allowed only to corps 1,000 strong. He asked, whether, it was possible for an adjutant, who had only six shillings a-day, and no horse allowed him, to attend a number of separate parishes, as he was now obliged to do, in the parts of the country which were thinly inhabited. The right hon. secretary, from being long a colonel of militia, must know that the description of officers recommended by the hon. gent. were most essential. But as the volunteer laws now stood, few could avail themselves of this benefit. For himself, he knew the want and the benefit of them by experience. Others he was sure, were in the same predicament.

Mr. *Secretary Yorke* said, there was this general regulation at present to render the volunteer corps complete and effective; that the corps would be disbanded, and the compulsory clauses resorted to, if they were not filled to the amount required by his Majesty's government. This was the standard which it was thought fit to adopt at present. Several other regulations may be useful, but he thought better not to press them now. He did not think his Majesty's ministers would be justified in entering at once into the expense which would be required for the measure recommended by the hon. gent. It was the best way to commence with an expense as low as possible, which could be increased if that was found necessary, whereas, if we commenced with a high expenditure, which we afterwards found we could not reduce, the improvement could not be made without the evidence of our actual loss. He begged also to impress the point urged by a noble lord (Castlereagh) last night, that it would be impossible to furnish such a number of officers from any army so much drawn upon already. There were 1,500 corps, and if an adjutant were to be allowed to each at 100*l.* a-year, the expense of this alone would be 150,000*l.* Permanent pay should not be given unless permanent duty was performed, and in the country these things were not always performed in the strictest manner. He hoped every measure would be taken which would tend to render the volunteer army effective, but he hoped that gent. would not press the introduction of any thing into this bill but the single principle on which it was founded.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* concurred in what had fallen from his hon. friend, and in a great measure with what had fallen from the hon. gent. over the way (Mr. Curwen), He concurred in the principle of what had

been proposed last night, as far as it was consistent with other principles, and particularly that of carrying with us the feelings of the volunteer officers, and the volunteer corps. The suggestion of the propriety of brigading the corps had his concurrence; but he doubted whether the introduction of field-officers, whatever advantage it may give in respect of discipline, could be reduced to practice. He feared it would hurt the feelings of the commanders of corps, that it would tend to diminish their respectability in their own opinion, and to impair the respect and influence which, on very just grounds, they at present have with their corps. He agreed that every facility should be given to the introduction of adjutants and serjeant majors; at the same time, as the whole of this subject required consideration, he wished, that these points should not be pressed now, and that the present bill should not be incumbered with any thing extraneous. Every one concurred in the propriety of every thing that could improve the discipline of the volunteers, without violating their feelings.—The question being put, leave was given to bring in the bill, which was read a first time. On the question for the second reading, in answer to a question from Sir W. Milner, who said that doubts existed on this point, the Attorney General stated from the acts that of last session being to be understood with reference to the act of the session before, that all corps whose services were accepted by his Majesty, were entitled to the exemption.—The bill was ordered to be read a second time on Monday.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, December 12.

[MINUTES.]—The Marquis of Stafford was sworn, and took his seat, on his accession to that peerage; as was also the Earl of Bristol, on a similar occasion.—The Lord Chancellor presented a petition from Allen M'Leod, who had been sentenced to be fined and imprisoned, stating his inability to pay the fine inflicted, and praying that their Lordships would be pleased in consideration of his long confinement, to grant him remission of the fine. The petition was ordered to lie on the table.—Lord King moved, that the proper officer be desired to lay before the House an account of the Bank of England Notes in circulation on the 25th of each month, from Feb. to Nov. last, distinguishing those under 5l. Ordered.—On his lordship's motion, a similar order was made relative to Notes of the Bank of Ireland,—

The Bills on the table were forwarded in their respective stages.

[EXPIRING LAWS BILL].—The Expiring Laws Bill was read a second time, and ordered to be committed to-morrow.

Lord *Suffolk* requested the House to take notice that certain annuities granted in the time of Queen Anne, for carrying on the war expired in 1804. He wished to know from a noble Sec. of State (Lord Hawkesbury), what was the amount of this sum, what was its intended application, and whether it was destined to go to the consolidated fund?

Lord *Hawkesbury* replied, that he was not then prepared to state the amount nor the application. But this could, however, be no obstacle in the way of the bill, as Parliament would still have the power of disposing of this money in any manner that might be thought expedient.

[CURATES' RELIEF BILL].—On the motion for the second reading of the bill for granting a sum of 8,000l. towards the relief of curates,

The *Earl of Suffolk* observed, that although he entirely approved of the principle of the bill, which he considered as calculated to ameliorate the situation of inferior clergymen, he could not think it went far enough. The sum which it provided towards their relief was not sufficient. Indeed, so very hard was the condition of them, that he had received several letters stating, that the salaries which they enjoyed had not, in many instances, been paid to the full extent provided by the legislature. The noble lord suggested the propriety in order to obviate these difficulties, that the money should be paid into the hands of some banker in the neighbourhood of the place where the party resides.—The bill was read a second time and committed for to-morrow.

[IRISH HABEAS CORPUS AND MARTIAL LAW BILL].—Lord *Hawkesbury* rose to move the second reading of the Irish Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill.—His lordship began his speech by stating to the House, that though it might not be exactly in order, he should, with the view of facilitating any discussion which might take place, introduce any observations which occurred to him to be necessary to justify the motion for the second reading of the Irish Martial Law Bill, which would follow the motion for the second reading of the bill now before the House. He felt himself authorised in pursuing this course, more particularly when he considered, that the same argument which would convince their lordships of the necessity and expediency of the one bill, would be equally applicable to the re-enactment of

the other. The circumstances which rendered the renewal of both bills necessary and expedient were now so similar to those under which they had been renewed at former periods, that he did not feel it his duty to trouble their lordships at any great length. When, however, he rose to propose any measure of such magnitude as that now before the house; when he rose to move for the renewal of bills, which, to a certain degree, suspended the ordinary privileges of the constitution among a very considerable proportion of the population of the united empire, he certainly considered it incumbent on him to give some explanation of the grounds on which he called on their lordships to vest the ministers of the crown with these extraordinary powers. He trusted that their lordships had seen nothing in the conduct of his Majesty's ministers which could induce them to believe that they would call for such extraordinary powers without the sincerest conviction of their imperious necessity. He would refer to every measure which they had taken, to prove that they had in no instance been forward to avail themselves of opportunities of getting such extraordinary powers entrusted into their hands. In every case of the renewal or reenactment of bills which went to invest them with powers which for a time suspended the usual privileges of the constitution, they had proceeded on the ground of such imperious necessity. They had seen, on former occasions, that such measures had contributed in a material degree to the salvation of the empire, and they conceived themselves bound, under circumstances nearly similar, to resort to measures of similar precaution and similar vigour. As his Majesty's ministers had not been forward to call for powers which they were conscious that they exercised under a most perilous responsibility, so their use of it certainly evinced nothing of a wish to employ those powers for any other purpose than the preservation of the public tranquillity in Ireland. He was happy that he could state, without fear of contradiction, that no one instance had occurred in which the powers granted by these bills had been exercised with wantonness, indiscretion or cruelty. With respect to the Martial Law Bill, he had to state to their lordships, that the powers which it granted were resorted to only in one solitary instance. In every other case the ordinary common law tribunals of the country had been resorted to. The result of this was not unknown to their lordships, and it was not unfair, from this past experience, to infer, that the same individuals who had exercised their powers with such

moderation, would not be likely to abuse them in future. It was the unfortunate state of Ireland which compelled ministers to resort to measures, which every friend to the constitution would adopt only when he viewed them as essential to the preservation of the state from the greatest miseries which could afflict a kingdom. He referred their lordships to the conduct pursued by ministers on the appearance of a most diabolical conspiracy in this country. On that occasion, several individuals had been convicted, on the clearest evidence, of a most atrocious conspiracy to compass the death of the sovereign, and had suffered the sentence of the law. What he desired their lordships to recollect, had been the conduct of ministers? Satisfied with having brought atrocious criminals to condign punishment, they had resorted to no extraordinary measures. They had not come to parliament and called on them to suspend any of the ordinary privileges of the constitution; they had appealed only to the common law courts of the country, and the cause of loyalty had been signally supported, while treason had suffered the punishment which it in every case merited. The Habeas Corpus Act continued in full force. The idea of introducing martial law was not thought of, even for a moment. The reason of this their lordships must clearly comprehend. It was the result of a conviction on the part of ministers, that the loyalty of the great mass of the population was sound to the core. They found that a few frantic individuals had meditated a most desperate attempt on the life of our beloved sovereign; but they knew that the people at large were attached to their king, and devoted to the constitution of their country. They punished criminals, but they did not invade the privileges or suspend, even for a moment, the liberties of a people who had given so many instances of their unalterable loyalty. Very different, however, their lordships would agree with him, was the situation of Ireland. He needed not to expatiate on the circumstances of that country in the year 1798. At that period their lordships were aware that a rebellion, the most extensive, the most desperate, and the most malignant which it was ever the fate of a government to combat, had broke forth with the greatest possible fury. It was not necessary for him to recall to the recollection of their lordships that the object of that rebellion was nothing short of the dissolution of British connexion, nothing less than the establishment of an independent government by means of the assistance of France. Fortunately, the valour of his Majesty's forces, aided by the co-opera-

ration of the loyal part of the population, had succeeded in putting down this rebellion, and in restoring tranquillity, at least tranquillity so far as the efforts of general rebellion were concerned. It was not, however, in the nature of things, that all the agitation, animosity, or revenge, which the atrocities of the rebellion had created, should at once subside. It was natural to expect, though rebellion was put down in the field, the spirit of its adherents was not broken. They dared no longer contend with the regular forces arrayed in the field; but they might be supposed to follow their former views in secret, and, unobserved, to prepare the means of new insurrections and new crimes. This was the conclusion which a general knowledge of human nature justified, and, certainly, events had fully demonstrated its truth. From the time of the rebellion in 1798, there had been various evidences of a spirit of disaffection. Without, however, enlarging on these, he should at present content himself with alluding to the transaction of the 23d of July. With the events of that day their lordships were sufficiently acquainted. The evidence on the trials of the wretched individuals who suffered for their guilt clearly explained the object and views of those engaged in the conspiracy. He would not now take up the time of their lordships, in any attempt to point out the extent or the force of this attempt at rebellion. One thing, however, was undoubted, and he begged leave to call it particularly to the attention of their lordships, and that was the circumstance of the abortive attempt of the 23d of July, having in view the same object, directed to the same end, of destroying the connexion betwixt this country and Ireland, by the assistance of the foreign and common enemy of both countries. Under these circumstances, he begged leave to appeal to the candour and fair judgment of their lordships, whether the notoriety of these events did not furnish a fair parliamentary ground of necessity for the renewal of the bills. A good deal might be urged as to the severity of the measure of establishing martial law. He would never pretend that this was not to be regarded as a measure of an extraordinary nature, and only to be justified on grounds of an extraordinary emergency. Their lordships would recollect that his Majesty, by the exercise of his prerogative, had the power of proclaiming martial law, when it appeared to him to be called for by the circumstances under which any part of the

empire might be placed. It was not, however, unknown, that when martial law was proclaimed in this way, all the ordinary forms of law were, for the time being, suspended. In fact, the common law was in the interval considered to be extinct. When circumstances required such an exercise of the prerogative, it was obvious that every member of the community must be subjected to material inconvenience. The object of the present bill was to operate as measures of precaution. They were designed to repress the views of the disaffected, without interfering with the course of civil and criminal proceedings in the ordinary courts. He viewed the Martial Law Bill not as a measure of severity, but of extensive clemency to the loyal part of the community of Ireland. In the course of the rebellion of 1798, the excesses committed on both sides were the subject of much animadversion. The rebels were accused of giving vent to their fury, by acts of barbarous cruelty. On the other hand, many individuals attached to the government, and active in their exertions to put down the rebellion, were charged with the commission of many acts of savage retaliation. Believing, as he firmly did, that there was a great deal of exaggeration respecting the conduct of both parties on the occasion to which he had referred, he could not but allow, that, to a certain degree, they were founded in truth. It was impossible, in the nature of things, that excesses could be altogether avoided. He was convinced, that the enactment of the Martial Law Bill was the measure which, more than any other, put an end to those excesses. It was clear to every one who reflected for a moment on the subject, that when individuals had the redress of their own injuries, real or supposed, put into their own hands, they were too seldom guided by moderation. The more unworthy passions of our nature too frequently gained the ascendancy; and resentment, not satisfied with the punishment of a particular injury, proceeded the length of savage and deliberate revenge. The enactment of martial law put an end to this system. Government were then armed with powers sufficient for the suppression of rebellion. The loyal part of the community felt a confidence of receiving adequate protection. Their individual passions no longer descended lower than the performance of their public duty, and those scenes which, at the origin of the insurrection, disgraced and afflicted humanity, were no longer repeated. This was

a view of the subject which he considered to be of the highest importance, and he earnestly intreated their lordships to weigh well the inference which it warranted. In this consideration of the question, every argument drawn from the severity of the measure was materially diminished in its application; particularly when it was recollected that, hitherto, it had never been resorted to, with the exception of one case, as he had already occasion to mention in the beginning of his speech. But, perhaps, it might be argued, that the circumstance of the powers granted by the bill not having been used, was the best proof of its not being necessary. He must be permitted to protest against any such inference, which did not at all appear to him to be conclusive. It was not by any means unfair to conclude, that the very existence of the powers granted by the bill, was the reason for their never being actually exerted. This was no uncommon circumstance in the history of human affairs. Precaution frequently prevented evils of the greatest magnitude. The apprehension of certain punishment, paralysed the efforts, and blasted the hopes of the most desperate offenders. He had, he trusted, shewn their lordships, that the measures which he proposed were not urged on light or frivolous grounds. He had begun by saying, that he at all times should feel reluctance in proposing measures of severity, or measures which, even for the shortest time, put any part of his Majesty's subjects out of the enjoyment of the ordinary privileges of the constitution. The principle of our constitution, and the principle of which we were proud, was, that the people should enjoy as great a portion of practical liberty as they could enjoy, or perhaps, he might add, as great a portion of liberty as ever was enjoyed by any civilized community since the beginning of time. It was not to be forgotten, however, that while it was the excellence of our constitution to grant to the people the greatest portion of practical liberty, it was one of its wisest provisions, that extraordinary powers should be vested in the executive government, on the appearance of circumstances of extraordinary emergency. The object of this wise provision was, to enable the executive government to take proper measures of precaution for the safety of the state when threatened with formidable dangers, and at the same time, as far as possible, suffer the ordinary tribunals of law, to go on with the ordinary functions. Such a power as this, which he

had now stated, grew out of the constitution, and was essential to its perfect application. It was an arrangement for affording to the well-affected part of the empire, the enjoyment of their usual privileges, and, at the same time, arming government with such powers as would enable them to put down rebellion, whether openly arrayed in the field, or secretly meditating the means of renewed insurrection. It was to the government, a measure of strength; to the well affected a measure of confidence and protection; to rebels, a measure of punishment and terror. In whatever light he regarded it as applicable to the present situation of Ireland, it appeared to him the wisest measure of precautionary power, that, under existing circumstances, could be adopted. Nothing but a conviction of its absolute necessity, could have induced his Majesty's ministers to urge its adoption. They had hitherto shewn no disposition to innovate on the privileges of the constitution, and, therefore, in proposing measures at this moment, which every friend to the constitution could propose only from a persuasion of their necessity, they were entitled to full credit for the sincerity of their motives. The noble lord, after a few more observations to the same effect, sat down by moving, first, that the bill for the continuance of the Irish Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill be read a second time.—The question being put from the chair,

The *Earl of Suffolk* rose, to offer a few remarks to the house. It was not his intention to oppose the motion of the noble secretary of state for the second reading of the bill more immediately before the house; nor for the second reading of the Martial Law Bill by which it was to be followed. He lamented exceedingly the necessity of such measures, but, believing them to be necessary, he could not, consistently with his duty, object to their adoption. What he chiefly rose to advert to at present, was the extraordinary deficiency of information which their lordships had to complain of respecting the present situation of Ireland. For his own part he was quite at a loss to know what was the state of that country, from anything which had fallen from his Majesty's ministers. This was, however, a subject so extremely interesting, that he could not reconcile it to himself not to make some attempt to obtain fuller information. The adoption of measures of severity proved that there was considerable disaffection, and that the people conceived themselves to labour under grievances which alienated their affections from the govern-

ment. When he heard of the existence of such grievances, he was naturally induced to enquire from what causes the complaints of the existence of these grievances proceeded. He really knew not where to apply for an answer to this question. He was at a loss to ascertain where he had reason to expect the solution of his doubts on the subject. With this view of the subject, he could not but think, that it was the duty of Parliament to make it the ground of specific inquiry. Till the real situation of Ireland was known, it was impossible for the legislature to know what were the measures most expedient to be adopted. When the grievances under which the people laboured were considered and understood, then, and then only, could an adequate, extended, and permanent remedy be applied. When insurrection existed in a country, and when that insurrection was suppressed, it then became the duty of a wise government to endeavour to discover what was the leading cause which induced the people to desert their allegiance. An inquiry into the state of Ireland was the indispensable duty of Parliament. He had pledged himself already to several of his friends in private, and he now distinctly pledged himself to the public, that unless some noble lord of greater ability took up the subject, he should certainly feel it his duty to bring the subject of the affairs of Ireland under the serious consideration of the house. He wished to explain to the noble secretary of State opposite (Lord Hawkesbury), the views which he entertained on this subject, and the sentiments which he felt respecting the best mode of proceeding in the redress of Irish grievances. He begged leave to remind their lordships of what took place when the rebellion in Ireland, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, was suppressed. It was then the advice of one of the greatest and wisest men that ever existed in any age of the world, he meant Lord Bacon, to her Majesty's government, that they should appoint a commission to enquire into the existing grievances of the people, and to consider of the most effectual means of redressing them. This was sound advice, which every wise and humane government would be disposed to follow. Force might put down rebellion in the field; but it was only the union of lenity and justice which could restore the alienated affections of a people believing themselves to labour under hardships of a most grievous nature. This, his lordship said, was the plan which he meant to recommend. He wished that a limited number of individuals, Members of

both houses of parliament, unconnected with ministers, with opposition, or with any party whatever, should be appointed as commissioners to collect full and accurate information respecting the real situation of Ireland. Uninfluenced by prejudices of any description, it would be their duty to examine things exactly as they were, and on their return to furnish a full and impartial report. By the adoption of such a plan as this, the parliament would have a fair opportunity of examining the subject of the affairs of Ireland, not on a partial, confined, and in some degree unintelligible scale, but on an ample and comprehensive view of the present circumstances of that country.—His lordship having thus explicitly put the house in possession of his views, in case the subject was not taken up by other noble lords, sat down by declaring, that after the declaration of ministers, and in the present absence of information, he could not, however reluctant he was to measures of severity, refuse his assent to the motion with which the noble Secretary of State had concluded his speech.

Lord King followed, and took occasion to animadvert strongly on the situation in which their lordships were called on, to pass bills of the nature which were now under their consideration. The fact was, that not a single tittle of evidence had been produced, to establish either their expediency, or, what was more important, their necessity. Ministers had called upon their lordships to pass bills, which they themselves allowed to be of a description only to be resorted to on occasions of an extraordinary nature, without adducing a shadow of evidence, to prove that the situation of Ireland was such as to require such proceedings. It was not to be forgotten, that such a call was not of a trivial or unimportant kind. It made an appeal to their lordships of a description which demanded the most serious consideration. When the question was, whether their lordships would pass a bill which would have the effect of literally putting about four millions of subjects out of his majesty's peace, he begged leave to ask, whether it was either decent or parliamentary to call on parliament to consent to a measure of such magnitude, without some striking proofs of its necessity or its expediency? It had been urged by the noble lord who introduced the subject, that the powers vested in the executive government by the Martial Law Bill were in no instance abused. His lordship contended, that this was not at all an argument which ought to have any considerable force. The question was not how the powers

granted by the bill were exercised, but whether such powers were necessary and fit to be intrusted to any executive government. He did not mean to say, that the government of Ireland at this moment were guilty of any acts of cruelty under this bill, but he meant to state, that independent of acts of cruelty, many severities might be experienced, many inconveniencies might be felt. When he said this, he wished to shew their lordships how his observation was fully justified. The Martial Law Bill, in his opinion, contained such provisions as entirely put it out of the power of any part of the inhabitants of Ireland fairly to represent the grievances under which the country laboured. He would put it to the candour and liberality of their lordships, whether any man would choose to put himself in a prominent situation, with all the terrors of martial law hanging over his head. The most respectable individuals in Ireland might be anxious to come forward and lay before the public an impartial representation of the grievances under which they conceived a large proportion of the population to labour; but was it to be supposed that they would do so, when they knew that by adopting this conduct they would expose themselves to obloquy, if not to the positive vengeance of individuals who would be desirous to misrepresent their views and expose them to the suspicions of government? This his lordship thought a matter of most grave consideration, and urged on the attention of their lordships what would be the consequence of passing such bills in the absence of all evidence of their necessity. What would the people of Ireland think of the conduct of the United Parliament, if they met with nothing on their part but measures of coercion? Would they not be ready to ask, and that, too, with every claim of justice, that at least some proofs of the necessity of such measures should be adduced? Even now there were many persons in Ireland not reconciled to the Union. It was surely, therefore, no more than what common justice demanded, that the Irish people were not now more severely treated than they were during the existence of a local legislature.—His lordship having urged this point with considerable force, declared that he could not vote against the motion of the noble Secretary of State, limited as was his present information respecting the actual situation of Ireland. He could not, however, sit down without declaring his conviction of the absolute necessity of a full and impartial investigation of the state of Ireland, a view of its grievances, and a plan of the best means of affording them effectual re-

dress.—In the course of his speech, the noble lord passed some severe strictures on the unsatisfactory and contradictory views given of the insurrection of the 23d of July. At one time it was represented as a miserable contemptible riot. At other times it was described as a widely extended, and formidable plan of rebellion. He did not pretend to decide which of these representations was correct; but he called the attention of their lordships to them, as an additional proof of the necessity of inquiry. If, on a subject of this notorious kind, there was a difference of opinion; if even his Majesty's ministers were not agreed on this subject, he really could not figure to himself a more decisive argument, to establish the necessity of a general systematic inquiry into the state of Ireland.

The *Marquis of Sligo* rose, he said, merely to say a few words in explanation. He supposed he was one of those alluded to, who had given a favourable view of the general loyalty of the population of Ireland. He had no wish to retract what he had formerly asserted on this subject; he only wished, that what he had said should be properly understood. He had asserted, that the temper of the people of Ireland was materially improved, and he had seen nothing to induce him to alter this opinion. True it was, that on the 23d of July, an insurrection had broke out, attended with circumstances of the utmost atrocity. In point of numbers, this certainly was a most contemptible and a most abortive attempt. He must, however, fully accede to the opinion delivered by the noble Secretary of State, that the insurrection, contemptible as it was in point of numbers or efficiency, was founded on the same principles which the rebels had avowed. These principles were, separation from Great Britain, the formation of a separate government, and that plan aided and abetted by the power of France. He was decidedly favourable to the re-enactment of both the bills. He was sure that they were essential to the maintenance of the tranquillity of Ireland, and if they were not passed he dreaded the most disastrous consequences.

A short pause having ensued, the Lord Chancellor was again proceeding to put the question from the woolsack: this called up

Lord Grenville, who, in common with the other noble lords who had preceded him, declared, that he did not rise with the view of giving his decided opposition to the motion of the noble Secretary of State, who had begun the discussion. He professed, however, that he rose under circumstances of peculiar embarrassment, to offer his senti-

ments shortly on the subject. The fact was, that at this moment their lordships were wholly without information on the subject of the state of Ireland, while his Majesty's ministers called on them to pass two bills, of a nature not less extensive than that of a power of depriving a large proportion of his Majesty's subjects of the most important privileges of the constitution. As the noble lord had thought proper to introduce the arguments in favour of both bills in the same speech, he had no objection to follow the same course, though he should have occasion, before he sat down, to shew, that the arguments which might establish the necessity of the one, would not at all apply in favour of the other. With the general principle laid down by the noble lord, in support of the measure, he most cordially agreed. His opinion on this subject was most decidedly recorded by his conduct. He certainly had always thought, and should on every occasion maintain the same opinion, that there were times and circumstances, when in conformity to the principles of the constitution, in its best times, extraordinary powers were to be granted to meet extraordinary circumstances of danger. It was, however, always to be recollected, that the circumstances which established the existence of this danger, should be clearly and unequivocally established. When this was the case, he should never pretend to object to extraordinary powers. Independent of such information, he did not see how any noble lord could in conscience give his support to any call on the part of ministers for extraordinary powers. At present, he thought that Parliament was placed in a most awkward predicament. He felt for himself personally, that he could not offer any decided opinion on the subject of the renewal of the bills. It could not be imagined that any noble lord should be adverse to any plan or measure, for the suppression of rebellion. On the other hand, it was a very serious matter to vote for measures of such magnitude as those now before the house, independent of all evidence of their necessity. At this moment, the only official information which the house had of the state of Ireland, was contained in his Majesty's speech from the throne. He desired their lordships to consider what was the effect of the information so communicated. Why, the fact was, that four months after what the noble Secretary of State had been pleased to call the transaction of the 23d of July, his Majesty's ministers had advised his Majesty, in his speech from the throne, to assure Parliament, that, since that time, there had been no appearance

of insurrection, but that, on the contrary, Ireland had remained in a state of undisturbed tranquillity. How far this was an accurate view of the state of Ireland, he had not the means of ascertaining. This, however, he had to observe, that it was the only official knowledge since the 23d of July, laid before Parliament, relative to the present state of Ireland. It was worthy of observation, however, the language used respecting this transaction. On the one hand, it was represented as a most formidable conspiracy; while, on the other, it was described as a most contemptible riot. How were their lordships to judge amidst such contrariety of statements? How were they to judge of the necessity of measures, the necessity of which could only be judged of by an accurate knowledge of the circumstances on which the bills were founded? Their lordships must see, that they were proposed on grounds very different from any that had hitherto been brought forward. In proof of this, he needed only to refer back to the circumstances under which they were introduced at former periods. At their first introduction into the Parliament of Ireland, their lordships were aware that rebellion actually raged in the country; that armies were levied by the insurgents, who disputed with the troops of his Majesty the possession of the island. After the experience of such circumstances, the bills had been repeatedly renewed by the local legislature of Ireland. How did the matter stand at the commencement of the first session of the United Parliament? By the local legislature the duration of the bills was limited to the twenty-fifth of March. At that time, certain circumstances which would be in the recollection of their lordships, but which it was not now necessary for him particularly to explain, prevented the necessity of any inquiry being instituted, as to the propriety of renewing the bills. It was judged, however, and in his opinion very properly, that it was not giving too much credit to the local legislature to allow them on their authority to be renewed for a short period. The bills were accordingly renewed on the same grounds. But what was the course which Parliament immediately thought it expedient to adopt? A secret committee of both Houses was appointed, and it was not till the report of these committees was produced, that the legislature re-enacted the bills. So far, generally, he must be allowed to say, that no evidence of the necessity of either of the bills was laid before Parliament.—He wished to make some observations more particularly calculated to explain his objections to

the Martial Law Bill. In the outset of the few observations which he had thrown out to their lordships, he had remarked that the noble lord who began the discussion, had not been altogether correct in mixing the question of the renewal of both the bills. As to the bill for the renewal of the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, though he saw no evidence of its necessity, still he must be permitted to contend, that it stood on a footing quite different from that of the other measure. Their lordships would easily see that this assertion could be supported without much difficulty. In forming a judgment of measures of such magnitude, it would not be denied, that the character of those by whom extraordinary powers were to be exercised, was a matter of the highest importance. With respect to the Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill, it would be seen, that those who were to exercise the powers which it vested, were persons of the highest rank in the state. Every step they took was a step open to future censure. Every measure they adopted was liable to the severest responsibility. Very different, however, was the situation of those who were to exercise the powers vested in the government by the Martial Law Bill. Their lordships needed only to look at the bill to be convinced, that many of those who were to carry its provisions into effect, if unfortunately it should be necessary to reduce them to practice, were individuals in whom no responsibility of the nature to which he had referred could attach. They might decide from want of adequate knowledge. They might labour under the influence of prejudice. They might in some cases be led away by local prepossessions, or decide under the pressure of temporary passions. He was sure that their lordships would agree with him in thinking, that when such inconveniences might be experienced, the powers of the nature which the bill granted ought not to be lightly conferred. But further, he requested of their lordships to reflect, that even allowing that evidence had been given of the necessity of the Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill, the other measures could only be defended by arguments of a nature totally different. He begged leave shortly to explain the views on which alone he had supported, or ever could support, a bill for depriving any part of his fellow subjects of the ordinary privileges of the constitution. When martial law was first introduced in Ireland, a rebellion of a most formidable nature raged with the utmost violence. That rebellion, by the valour of the King's troops, and the spirit and zeal of the loyal inhabitants, was suppress-

ed. As was to be expected, however, much rancour and much malignity continued to agitate those, whose open attempts at rebellion had been defeated. When they found that they could not attack the King's troops, or the loyal part of the community in arms, it was necessary for them to change their mode of attack. A system of murder and intimidation was accordingly introduced, and a regular conspiracy was formed to interrupt the ordinary forms and proceedings of the courts of common law. Magistrates were prevented from performing the duties of their office at the peril of their lives. Judges were prevented from presiding at trials at the peril of their lives. Jurors were deterred from giving verdicts on the clearest evidence at the peril of their lives. Witnesses at the same hazard were deterred from giving their evidence. In a word, the proceedings of the civil and criminal courts of the country were totally suspended. A system of intimidation had, for the time, annihilated every form of law, and every privilege attached to fair and equitable justice. What was to be done under such circumstances? Some strong measure must have been immediately adopted, or the country must have been left a prey to all these horrors. The measure of martial law was adopted, and the effect which it produced on the restoration of tranquillity was immediate. Government vested with extraordinary powers, was enabled to arrest the progress of these atrocious conspirators. Rebels seeing the prospect of martial law before them, ceased to have any object in obstructing the proceedings of the ordinary tribunals. Things reverted to their former order, and the establishment of martial law, so far from suspending, was, in fact, the means of restoring the operation of the common law courts. It was from a contemplation of these circumstances, and a knowledge of these effects, that he had, on former occasions supported the establishment of martial law in Ireland. Though he would not go quite so far as to assert, that these were the only grounds on which he could feel himself authorised in voting for a bill which went the length of establishing martial law in any part of the empire, yet he would assert unequivocally, that they were by far the strongest grounds which could induce him to sanction such a strong measure. Having laid down this general principle, he begged leave to put it candidly to their lordships, whether any such evidence had now been adduced to justify the measure? Had the noble lord at all insinuated that any

system of intimidation at present prevailed in Ireland? Were magistrates impeded in the exercise of their functions? Were judges unable to perform their duties without turbulence and anarchy? Could jurors not give verdicts according to the dictates of their conscience? Could witnesses not deliver their evidence without the dread of fatal consequences? He was confident that the noble lord would not make any one of these assertions. He appeared, on the contrary, to glory in the idea, that the utmost tranquillity prevailed; that the proceedings of the civil and criminal courts experienced no interruption; that criminals were tried without molestation, and that they suffered the sentence of the law without any violation of the public tranquillity. He professed himself astonished, after such admissions on the part of his Majesty's ministers, to hear them gravely asserting the necessity of establishing martial law in Ireland. He would concede to the noble lords or any other of his Majesty's ministers, that in case of actual rebellion the proceedings of the civil and criminal courts must necessarily be suspended. Common law was in that interval annihilated. It was, during the continuance of such a calamity, virtually extinct. *Inter arma leges silent* was equally the institution of society, and the dictate of reason and nature. He was far from wishing to dispute so obvious a position. But he must object to the introduction of any system to reconcile the existence of martial law and common law at the same period. If the courts of common law could go on with their functions, martial law was unnecessary and dangerous. On the other hand, if martial law were really necessary, the common law, however much the event must be lamented, must for a period lose its application and efficiency. On these principles he must, in an abstract view of the subject, disapprove of the re-enactment of the martial law bill. At the same time he had to lament what he observed at the outset of his speech, that he was so situated that he could not give a decided negative to either of the bills. He did not see sufficient grounds to induce him to think that they were necessary; but, as his Majesty's ministers had declared them to be necessary, he could not at such a moment as this oppose their future progress. He had thought it his duty shortly to deliver his sentiments, and he trusted he had said nothing which was inconsistent with his duty as an honest and independent member of Parliament.

Lord *Limerick* made a short but spirited reply. He had himself but a very short time ago left Ireland. He had made it his business to examine carefully into the present situation of that country, and he now rose to state to their lordships what was the result of that examination. What he was about to state was grounded on no loose or idle rumours, but was the result of positive knowledge, and of honest feeling. Standing, then, in his place as a representative of the peerage of Ireland, he took on himself decidedly to assert, and he was confident that he should not be contradicted, that the re-enactment of both the bills now before their lordships was essentially necessary to the continuance of tranquillity in that part of the united empire. He could, with equal safety, make the same declaration in behalf of all the loyal part of the community in that country. They, to a man, expected that the bills would be renewed. They would consider any government which would not propose their renewal as indifferent to their best interests, and would curse the hour in which a united legislature was formed, which would not pass for their protection the measures which had been found so beneficial under a local legislature. The noble lord took occasion to allude to what had been said about the atrocity of the 23d of July, an atrocity, the infamy of which he was afraid would not be easily effaced from the character of his unfortunate country. With those who described the insurrection of that day as a contemptible riot, he could not possibly agree. Contemptible with regard to number it certainly was; but when its objects and ends were considered, it was of a very different description. He would assert, without fear of contradiction, that it bore distinctly all the features of the rebellion of 1798; that it looked to the same object of Irish separation from this country, that it was fomented before the breaking out of the war by French influence, and that latterly it was encouraged by the hope of French assistance. Such were his ideas of the insurrection of the 23d of July, and such he was sure were the views entertained of it by all the best affected, and most intelligent persons in Ireland. — As to the want of information adverted to by noble lords, he protested that he was altogether astonished at such language. The insurrection of the 23d of July, and the events which distinguished it, were matters of universal notoriety, and it was absurd to say, that they did not furnish grounds to shew the necessity of the measure. It had been contended against the

necessity of renewing martial law, that the business of the ordinary courts of law was not suspended, that criminals were condemned and executed without molestation. This he did not wish by any means to deny; but he could account for it in a most satisfactory manner. It would be recollected, that the greater part of the late state trials had taken place in Dublin. Now, what he desired their lordships to know was, the state of that metropolis while these trials were going forward. At that time there was a force of armed men of not less than twelve thousand. Not a motion of insurrection could go forward. Not a step could be taken by the insurgents without an almost certain detection; under these circumstances it was not to be wondered at that tranquillity prevailed. It was unfair, however, to suppose, that if trials had taken place in remote districts, the same good order and peaceable conduct would have been observed. He was persuaded that the contrary would have been the case. There were, it is true, commissions in the counties of Antrim and Down, and there too no riot or disturbance was experienced. He was proud also to admit this, but at the same time he thought it necessary to say, that in these counties the spirit of loyalty was decidedly prevalent. The noble lord considered, nevertheless, that nothing short of martial law could effectually keep down a spirit of insurrection, always ready to avail itself of favourable opportunities. A noble lord (Earl Suffolk,) had said a good deal of the grievances of Ireland, and had intimated his intention to move for a commission, composed of individuals connected with no party. He could not help considering this as a most extraordinary sort of proposition. Irish grievances formed now a very hacknied topic; but even at present, he declared himself somewhat at a loss to understand the exact import of the term. He believed, that those who dilated so much on this subject would collect much useful information from the testimony of Doctor Macneven, Doctor Arthur O'Connor, and Doctor Emmett, the brother of the young man who had lately forfeited his life to the violated laws of his country. What were, he desired their lordships to reflect, the sentiments of these most reverend doctors on the subject of Irish grievances? Was it catholic emancipation they sought for? No! this was beneath their notice. Was it equal representation? the thing was ridiculous. Was it the abolition of tithes? this was equally contemptible. In a word, it was nothing short of Irish independence, and

the abolition of kingly government. These were the grievances of Ireland, about which some noble lords appeared so concerned. The noble lord, after dwelling a little longer on this topic, sat down by giving his decided vote in favour of both bills.

The *Lord Chancellor* said, that he would not have thought it necessary to trouble their lordships on the present occasion, had he not deemed it a duty which he owed, both to himself and to the House, in a question of a constitutional nature, to express openly and broadly, the ground on which he supported the measure. He along with the noble lord who spoke last, had, on a former occasion, given his most decided approbation of the adoption of a similar measure in this country at a period when the exigency of the case seemed to demand it. He felt gratified at the recollection of that circumstance, and he entertained, and, to the last moment of his existence, should entertain, the deepest sense of gratitude to the noble lord, and to his colleagues in office, for the adoption of that measure. To it, he was morally convinced, their lordships were indebted for their present tranquillity and comfort, and for the privilege which they now enjoyed, of deliberating how far they should submit to a temporary relinquishment of part of their rights, for the permanent preservation of the whole. That the measures now proposed were necessary he was conscious in his own mind. The whole circumstances, which had occurred, had convinced him of that necessity. He agreed with the noble lord, that it was not on the word of ministers, that such necessity was to be taken for granted. Noble lords must be convinced that it actually existed, before they could agree to any measure which had for its object to encroach on the constitutional liberties of any part of the community. In considering this point, he could not throw out of his recollection that a measure, similar to the present, had been adopted with regard to Ireland, on the representation of several of the members for that country, after it had been previously gone into by their own legislature. Whether properly or not he should not pretend to say, the measure had been allowed to drop; and another application for its renewal became necessary in consequence of the proceedings of the 23d July. It had been said, this was a contemptible riot, and no insurrection; and that, therefore, we were not called on to continue the harsh enactments now proposed. His lordship said, that it was difficult in such a case to say what was contemptible, and dangerous to sport with a

danger because it was apparently trifling. What in one hour appeared an inconsiderable or contemptible riot, might in a week be a formidable insurrection. What to-day was an insurrection, might be in a condition to-morrow to brand with a similar epithet, the regular government which it had originally opposed. It was imprudent; it was worse—it was a desertion of our duty to tamper with popular feeling, or popular prepossessions, to disaffection. But it was said, his Majesty's speech declared that every thing was quiet in Ireland, and held out a hope, that the deluded people of that country had come to a sense of their folly. This he maintained, was not a fair inference to be drawn from his Majesty's speech. By the vigilance of government, and by the effect of the late trials, any open appearance of disaffection had been stopped; and the speech, too, held out a hope that his Majesty's deluded subjects in that country were now restored to their senses. Might it not, however, be fairly inferred that one of the grounds of that hope was the existence of the very measures now under consideration, and the consciousness, that such measures were calculated to aid the loyal subjects of that country in maintaining good order and tranquillity. He could not refrain from paying, not a compliment, but a merited tribute to the criminal jurisprudence of that country, for the temperate, yet firm and vigorous justice, which on the late trials it had administered. While its temperance and moderation must have conciliated the minds of those not lost to every sense of justice and reason, and have taught them to prize that law, which, as British subjects, they enjoyed, its vigour must have greatly tended to keep in awe the licentious and unruly, and to convince them, that its firmness was equal to its moderation and justice. The circumstance, that it was only found necessary on one occasion to resort to the extraordinary means now proposed, so far from evincing that such measures were not necessary, only showed the delicacy which government observed in the use of them, and that such powers were properly entrusted to the Irish government. The knowledge that such powers might when necessary be employed, might have been the very cause which rendered the adoption less frequent. The notoriety of the recent outrages in Ireland; the uncertainty whether they were completely crushed, and the spirit of insurrection totally extinguished, were, his lordship conceived, sufficient grounds of the measure. Other grounds might exist, but it was unnecessary to press them forward,

when circumstances to justify the measure were notorious to all. His lordship concluded by giving his hearty assent to the bills; an assent, which in similar circumstances, he should deem himself deficient in his duty were he to withhold from similar applications, as to this country.

Earl Darnley insisted, that no parliamentary ground was laid for the present measures. He did not, however, presume to say, that they were not necessary. The House, however, ought to be fully convinced of their necessity, and, that upon parliamentary grounds, before they passed them. He adverted to the conduct of the government of Ireland, which he was clearly of opinion, was surprised on the 23d of July. Blame, on this account, must attach to ministers, and the recall of the commander in chief seemed to fix it upon him. A noble lord (Limerick) had quoted the opinions of certain *state doctors*, viz. M'Neven, Emmet, and O'Connor.—“For my part,” said Lord Darnley, “experience has taught me to expect no “good in politics from a doctor!”

Lord Hobart said, that he would not have troubled the House on the present occasion, had it not been for the concluding observations of the noble lord who spoke last. He knew that no blame did attach to government on that day. They were aware of the attack, and had given intimation to the commander of the forces and to the Superintendent of the Police. Government could not divine in what street the insurrection might break out; but had the rebels proceeded to the Castle, to the Bank, or to the dépôt of arms, they would have found every thing in readiness for their reception. He thought it proper to state, that no blame was imputable to the commander of the forces. His dismissal from that situation was at his own request, and his immediate employment afterwards, was not meant as a recompence for that situation, but because government would have deemed themselves culpable, had they allowed the military talents of an officer of such known abilities to remain unemployed at the present period.—The two bills were then read a second time, and ordered to be committed to-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS. Monday, December 12.

[MINUTES].—Mr. Baldwin presented a petition from the prisoners confined for debt in the county gaol of Cardigan. Ordered to lie upon the table.—Mr. Corry brought up an estimate of the expenses attending the Linen Board in Ireland for one year, from Jan. 5, 1804, to Jan. 5, 1805.—Leave

was given to bring in a bill to enable his Majesty to grant certain lands in Chertsey, &c. to H. R. H. the Duke of York.—Mr. W. Dundas gave notice, that he should not bring forward, till after the recess, the motion which it was his intention to make respecting the militia of Scotland.—Leave was given to bring in a bill for punishing mutiny and desertion, and for the better payment of their quarters.—Leave was given to bring in a bill for the regulation of his Majesty's royal marine forces, while on shore.—Mr. Secretary Yorke moved the second reading of the bill for explaining two acts, passed in the 42nd and 43rd of his present Majesty, relating to volunteers, and yeomanry corps. It was accordingly read a second time, and ordered to be committed to-morrow. The House resolved itself into a Committee of Supply, in which a variety of small sums were voted for the maintenance of convicts at home and abroad, and other miscellaneous services voted annually.—Mr. Corry also moved the miscellaneous services for Ireland, which were agreed to; and the report ordered to be received to-morrow.

[REPORT ON THE ARMY ESTIMATES.] On the motion for bringing up the report on the army estimates,

Colonel Craufurd rose and spoke as follows:—Sir; in the debate which took place on Friday last, the Committee was so long occupied in attending to the speeches of gentlemen either the most distinguished for their talents or of the greatest weight from their official situations, that I thought it better to defer offering my opinions on the subject until the report should be brought up.—Amongst the various topics which have been, or naturally may be introduced into this discussion, there is no one which more prominently presents itself to my mind, than that which in the last session formed the ground of a specific motion in this House. I mean, the establishment of a military council.—At a time when (in addition to the immense sums that the public is called upon in other ways to contribute for military purposes) Parliament deems it necessary to vote establishments so large and expensive as those contained in the estimates now before us; at a time, Sir, when we are engaged in a war the most arduous and critical in which this country was ever involved, it undoubtedly is the first duty of every member of this House, to suggest all those means which in his judgment would conduce to the bringing our military system to the highest pitch of perfection, and to the placing the national defence and security upon a great, solid and permanent basis; and the accom-

plishment of these most important objects would, in my opinion, be greatly promoted by the establishment of a military council, properly composed. When this subject was mentioned on Friday last, by an hon. gent. not now present (Mr. Fox), the Chancellor of the Exchequer told us, that he had reason to believe that many of those who formerly had wished for such a council, were now, upon further consideration of it, convinced that it would be productive of no advantage, and of many inconveniences to the public service.—I cannot pretend to say what change may have taken place in the opinions of others, but I think it right to declare that mine remains unaltered, that the vote which I formerly gave, when the question was agitated in this House, was not lightly given, and that having fully considered the subject since, I am confirmed in my conviction of the propriety of that vote. But, before I proceed to state my reasons for adhering to this opinion, I cannot help expressing my surprise that whenever the measure has been recommended on the one side, and resisted by his Majesty's ministers on the other, it has been resisted chiefly on the ground that it would imply a want of confidence in the abilities of the commander in chief. For my own part, Sir, I am very sure that I never made any proposal, never stated any opinion, or uttered a single expression in this House, which, if liberally or fairly construed, could possibly be considered as conveying anything disrespectful or disparaging of that illustrious personage; although I well recollect that such insinuations were thrown out against me both in and out of this House. I am, however, totally regardless of what may be the effect of these or similar misrepresentations: they shall never deter me from freely and openly delivering my opinions; and, therefore, I have no hesitation in declaring, that in the present situation of affairs, I do not believe his Royal Highness to be capable, without further assistance, of doing ample justice to the country, in the administration of the various branches of the military department of the public service. When I say this, it is not that I do not think as highly as any man of his Royal Highness's abilities and exertion; but I do not hold *him* to be equal to such a task, because I believe, that no one man can perform it.—I am fully sensible, Sir, of the great advantages which the country has derived from his being placed at the head of the army; and I know, that he devotes himself to the discharge of his public duties with a degree of laborious assiduity, rarely to be met with in any man, and still more rarely perhaps, in a man of his high birth. But, completely occupied as he is, in

dispatching the urgent and pressing business that daily occurs in the command of such a force as we now have on foot, it is not possible that he should have sufficient time and leisure left for reflecting, as deeply and maturely as the subject requires, on all the possible means of improving the national defence, and establishing it upon one great combined and permanent system.—But, it has been said, has he not already a council of able officers to assist him? Are not the staff this council?—Undoubtedly, Sir, his Royal Highness's staff is composed of very able and respectable officers; but they, too, are fully engaged with the details of their respective departments.—It has also been urged, that all the general officers who are employed, are, in fact, his council, as he has constant opportunities of having recourse to their advice; but here, again, I must object, not only that these general officers are greatly occupied with the particular business of their respective commands, but also that their being necessarily dispersed, at a great distance from the commander in chief, and from each other, is an obstacle to their rendering that service, which might be expected from such a council as I have in view. But let it not be supposed that I am proposing a council, for the purpose of controlling the commander in chief, in the direction of the active operations of the army in the field. What I mean to recommend is a council comprising within it some officers of great experience and acknowledged abilities, who would devote the whole of their time to the mature investigation of every means, that might be proposed by others, or should occur to themselves, for increasing our military strength, digesting and combining the whole into one great and comprehensive system.—The establishment of such a council, of which the commander in chief would be president, and the master and lieutenant-general of the ordnance (amongst others) would be members, would have the advantage of uniting and bringing, under one view, those different branches of the military service which are now independent of each other; as every thing relating to the military branch of the ordnance department would come under its cognizance—I say the *military*, as contradistinguished from the *naval* branch.—I also think, that, without being accused of speaking slightly either of his Royal Highness, the commander in chief, or of the noble lord at the head of the ordnance, I may be allowed to say, that any proposal for the defence of the country, coming from such a council, would carry with it greater weight than if proceeding either from the commander

in chief, or from the master general; and that ministers would feel, that in neglecting to attend to such a recommendation, they would take upon themselves a serious responsibility.—Ministers, indeed, and those who approve of their conduct, contend, that nothing necessary for the defence of the empire has been neglected; from whence they infer, that we have not felt the want of such a council: but, as I deny the premises, I cannot grant the conclusion. I contend, that there has been much neglect and mismanagement; and, to prove this assertion, I must shortly revert to a period which was referred to in the former debate, I mean that immediately subsequent to the treaty of Amiens.—Without at all entering into the merits of that treaty, I shall merely say, that even if after the conclusion of it, the conduct of the French government had been apparently pacific; yet, when we consider that by that treaty we recognized them as legitimate sovereigns of the Netherlands, and that the possession of that country, which at any time would have given France a predominant influence in Holland, does in the present state of Europe give them the absolute command of it; it undoubtedly behoved us to adopt a new and more enlarged military system than had ever before been deemed necessary, and to employ ourselves during the peace in strengthening our means of defence in proportion to the increased means of offence which France would possess in case of a renewal of war.—This, I say, was obviously necessary, even supposing the conduct of the French government had been apparently pacific. But what was their conduct? What it really was, Sir, it is unnecessary for me to examine; it is sufficient for my argument to consider in what light his Majesty's ministers themselves viewed it, which they have fully explained to us in their declaration on the renewal of hostilities.—They there tell us, that “It may with truth be asserted, that the period which has elapsed since the conclusion of the definitive treaty, has been marked with one continued series of aggression, violence, and insult, on the part of the French government.” That “it is impossible to reflect on the different proceedings, and the course which the French government have thought proper to adopt respecting them, without the thorough conviction that they are not the effect of accident, but that they form a part of a system which has been adopted, for the purpose of degrading, vilifying, and insulting his Majesty and his government.” Now, Sir, I ask, is it possible, that his Majesty's ministers, viewing the conduct of France in

this light, should really have thought that the peace would be of long duration? Is it possible that any set of men, composing the government of this brave and powerful nation, of a people jealous of their honour, and at all times ready to resent an insult offered to themselves, or their Sovereign? Is it, I say, possible, that the ministers of such a country should have been capable of believing, that we could long remain at peace with a government which, as they themselves tell us, had, since the conclusion of the definitive treaty, acted upon a system of degrading, vilifying, and insulting his Majesty and his government? Under such circumstances, I cannot help supposing that they must at least have considered the duration of the peace to be very precarious; and if it was easy for them to foresee the probability of war, it was no less easy to foresee what would be the *nature* of it. Has a single circumstance occurred which was not expected? Did they reckon upon the co-operation of allies, who have since deserted them? No; they could have no such expectation. Is Buomaparte's project of invading this country any thing new and unexpected? Certainly not. When they made the peace of Amiens, they knew he had it in contemplation, if the war had continued; and therefore, might be sure that if it should be renewed under such circumstances, he would again prepare to invade us? Since then, they must have foreseen both the probability of a rupture, and the precise nature of the war that would ensue. Did it not once occur to them to consider a little what measures were or might eventually become necessary to meet such an attack? Did they not consider that a rapid increase of the army would become necessary, and that, therefore, it was their duty to prepare beforehand the means of effecting it? Could they not foresee, that in a war of such a nature, they would be obliged to call upon a great part of the population of the country to assist the army in its defence? And did it never occur to them, that in order to enable the people to fight, it would be necessary to give them arms? I am perfectly ready to admit, that the statement made by a noble lord (Castlereagh) on Friday last, respecting the number of arms that have been issued, is more satisfactory than circumstances had led me to expect; and I have no hesitation in declaring, that, in my mind, it fully acquits the board of ordnance of any imputation of neglect or want of exertion since the breaking out of the war. But, I am not the less of opinion, that the ministers were, in the highest degree culpable, for not having long ago enabled

that department to fill the arsenals; and, it is a notorious fact, that much less than two months ago, nay, at the very period (I mean Michaelmas) when, by the general Training Bill, as first brought into the house by his Majesty's ministers, all exercising and drilling was to have been suspended till Lady Day next, not one half of the volunteers were armed. Another precaution, which the situation of this country, after the peace of Amiens, naturally suggested the propriety of adopting, but which appears, during that period, to have been wholly overlooked, is that of defensive works; and no man, I think, will deny, that if these had been commenced as they ought to have been, during the peace, our coasts would now have been in a state of much greater security than any which they can derive from such imperfect works as have since been hastily thrown up. No man, for instance, can doubt that the towers mentioned on Friday by my right hon. friend (Mr. Windham) or other works possessing the properties of these towers, I mean security against assault, would afford much more effectual opposition to disembarkation, than can be expected from low and weak batteries, which may be easily taken possession of by the enemy's infantry. These, Sir, and other such measures of defence and precaution, would probably not have been neglected by his Majesty's ministers, if they had been recommended, as no doubt they would have been, by such a council as I have proposed; because, as I have before observed, the neglecting to attend to the advice of such a council (recorded as it would be on their minutes) would have thrown upon ministers a greater degree of responsibility than attaches to the not adopting the advice of any *one* man, however elevated his rank.—It will be said, I suppose, that all these measures would have been expensive, and that it was, therefore, advisable to practise economy, to keep up the funds, &c.; a mode of reasoning which does not deserve an answer. But, what will be the excuse for having neglected those precautions which were not attended with any expense? If it was foreseen, as it certainly must have been, that a rapid increase of the regular forces, and a great armament of the people would be necessary, why, at least, were not those laws prepared at leisure, which, when a rupture took place, it would become the duty of government to propose to Parliament for the carrying these measures into effect? As an excuse for the imperfect state in which the different bills were brought forward, it is said, that they were framed under the pressure of critical

circumstances, and that such a system could not be expected to be made perfect at once. Now this, which they allege as an excuse, is, in fact, the very ground of my charge against them. Their defence, in this case, like their justification of the Irish government, only makes the matter worse; for, I ask, why were these measures hastily framed under the pressure of critical circumstances? Why were they not maturely considered and digested before the renewal of a war which must have been foreseen?—A most serious evil resulting *entirely* from the mistakes committed in drawing up these bills is, that we have now nearly 400,000 men exempted from the army of reserve and militia ballot. I have, indeed, heard the right hon. Sec. of State maintain, that the granting these exemptions was not, as I contend, the effect of a mistake; but that it was in the contemplation of Parliament, at the time, to give to the act, under which the volunteers claim the exemption, the full effect, which it has since been discovered to have produced. Now, I am perfectly convinced, that the great majority at least of this House had no such intention; and I have good reason to suppose, that his Majesty's ministers themselves had it not; for it appears, that sometime after the close of the session, the Sec. of State wrote a letter to the Attorney and Solicitor General, desiring to know, whether in their opinion, the volunteers were really entitled to these exemptions? It is, indeed, curious to observe, how this clause, granting exemptions, got into the system.—In passing the act for raising the army of reserve, the greatest anxiety was shewn by the Committee, to confine the exemptions within as narrow limits as possible; and the act provides, that only such volunteers should be exempted as had been accepted before the 22d day of June, 1803.—In the general Training Bill, which followed the above, it is expressly enacted, that this act is not to exempt persons from being balloted for the militia or army of reserve.—In the 120th ch. Geo. III. being an act for amending the last mentioned, no notice is taken of exemption from ballot. But there comes a Bill, of which, from its title, it was impossible for any member to suppose, that any thing contained in it would repeal one of the most important provisions of the preceding acts, but which has since been discovered to have produced this effect.—It is the 121st chap. Geo. III. and is entitled, “An Act for bill-letting Volunteers when assembled, for subjecting to military discipline Serjeants, Trumpeters, Drummers, and Buglemen, who receive constant pay; and for the further re-

gulating such Yeomanry and Volunteer Corps.” And this is the Act, which in the opinion of the Attorney and Solicitor General, given in answer to a query from the Secretary of State, is declared to have repealed that clause of the Army of Reserve Bill, which denied the exemption from ballot to any volunteers, excepting those who had been accepted before the 22d of June. I, therefore, cannot believe that this was intentionally done by his Majesty's ministers; and I am very sure it was without the knowledge of by far the greater part, if not the whole, of the other members of this House. Now, this general exemption, which I consider as the effect of a *mistake* in the framers of the last bill, is, in my opinion, by far the greatest defect in the whole of the volunteer system. It greatly interferes with the recruiting the army of reserve and militia; it gives to certain persons in the volunteer corps a very improper power of deciding, who shall or shall not be subject to the ballots, accordingly as they please to accept or reject the offers of those who wish to enter their corps; and it gives a dubious character to the whole volunteer institution, inasmuch as it is now impossible to distinguish those who come forward from pure zeal and patriotism, from such as are actuated only by a desire of escaping the operation of the other Bills.—Sir, before I conclude, I must take the opportunity of again reverting to the subject of fortifications; and without entering into any detailed reasoning, I will assert, that without fortifications, every defensive system must be extremely imperfect. To execute them on a great scale is, undoubtedly, a work of time; but, I ask, has any such system been *commenced*?—In Ireland, for instance, where the necessity of fortresses has been recognized and pointed out, I believe, by every officer who ever gave an opinion on the subject, I do not understand that government has gone the length of even marking out a single spot of ground for the purpose. With respect to the extent to which it would be advisable to carry the system of fortifications in England, there may be some variety of opinion; but there is one subject upon which, *if we are really exposed to invasion*, no difference of opinion can possibly exist. I mean the propriety of fortifying a great military dépôt and place of arms: that is, to say, of fortifying it at least to such a degree that it cannot be taken without a siege; for, although I go, perhaps, as far as any man, in believing that the enemy may effect the disembarkation of a great force in this country, yet, I am aware,

that he will have very great difficulty in landing all the ammunition and military stores that are necessary for a long operation. If therefore, our military dépôts were secure against a coup de main, the enemy, unable to possess himself of them, would find the difficulties of an invasion infinitely increased, as he would be under the necessity of attempting to form a magazine of his own, and of preserving a communication with it. I must repeat, that if such a council as I have proposed had existed, I do not believe, that all these precautions would have been so completely neglected, as they appear to have been.—With respect to the estimates themselves, they appear to be little different from the establishment voted during the last session, and I have, therefore, little to remark upon them; but as it is, undoubtedly, of the utmost importance, that the regular army should be increased as much as possible, I must again repeat my regret, that the measure which was successfully adopted last war, has not again been resorted to; I mean that of recruiting from the militia; for without disparagement to the latter, I may be allowed to say, that the former is a more efficient force. I also regret that the militia of Great Britain and Ireland has not been made interchangeable; a measure which always appeared to me, to be one of the advantages that would naturally result from the union. There is another species of military arrangement highly deserving of attention (I know not how far it has been carried); I mean an extensive organization of the unarmed peasantry into a corps of pioneers. It is impossible to estimate too highly the benefit which we should derive from their assistance, particularly when we consider, that the face of this country, covered as it is with enclosures, is of a nature that greatly impedes the action of those two descriptions of force in which we shall be so decidedly superior to an invading enemy, that is to say, cavalry and artillery. The advantage of this superiority we shall be in a great measure deprived of, without the aid of numerous bodies of pioneers, to facilitate the operation of these two arms. I should, therefore, be desirous of seeing a great proportion of the peasantry immediately enrolled into corps for this purpose; and I should recommend, that they should, at the same time, be armed with pikes, the manufacture of which requires very little time or expense, and which they can make use of without any previous instruction. With this arm I am convinced, that, in

opposing a disembarkation, and on many other occasions, they would add very powerfully to the effect of an attack, if they were judiciously managed, and not exposed to the enemy's fire until the moment presented itself for charging him.

Mr. Rose said, it was by no means his intention to oppose any of the resolutions, but he wished to make a few observations connected with the general subject before the House. The principal point on which he meant to trouble the House related to the measures necessary to be adopted in the event of marching volunteers to the coast. It appeared to him that the sum, proposed to be voted for volunteers, was too small, because, upon the best calculation he could make, it would require very little less than one million. If they were to be employed at all in that way, he thought that some provision ought to be made for their families. Upon this subject, he had lately had some correspondence with one of his Majesty's principal Secretaries of State, and he begged to acknowledge the great readiness which that right hon. gent. had shewn to attend to his representations. There was in one of the acts a provision upon this subject, in case the volunteers were called out upon actual service. Some doubt had arisen respecting the word "called" out on actual service; but in his opinion, if they were out, some provision ought to be made for their families. Some of the corps in his neighbourhood were now upon actual duty, and when they offered their services for that purpose, they made no stipulations upon the subject. When he learnt from the Lord Lieutenant that it was wished, that some of the volunteers should march to the coast, he assembled the corps nearest to him, and when the proposal was made to them, they cheerfully offered their services; of 296 there was but one man that made the smallest objection to it. Afterwards, some of them came to him, and represented the impossibility of their maintaining their families. The corps to which he alluded, was in general composed of labouring men, who earned, upon an average, about nine shillings a-week; with this they were enabled to maintain their families. If they were marched from home, they would receive a shilling a-day, out of which it was obvious, they could not maintain both themselves and their families, it would, therefore, be absolutely necessary, that some provision should be made for their families, otherwise it would be impossible for them to continue in the service. The corps to which he alluded, were animated with the most

ardent desire to devote their services to the public, and to go wherever their services could be useful. When he was speaking to them about marching, and explaining to them their district, they said. "Don't tell us, Sir, about districts, we will follow our officers any where." Out of 296 men, of which the corps was composed, 294 marched from home and were now actually on duty. He had heard regularly from the commanding officer, ever since they marched, and every letter was full of applauses of the conduct of the men. This spirit was not confined to the spot to which he alluded, it was, he was sure, general all over the country, and he should be sorry indeed, to see such a spirit damped. It at first occurred to him; that the allowance to their families ought to be paid by the county; but, upon consideration he thought otherwise, because the burthen would then fall peculiarly heavy on the maritime counties, where the volunteers would be most frequently required to march to the coast, and, therefore, he thought they ought to be paid out of the general fund. This was a subject on which he really felt much anxiety, and, therefore, the House, he hoped, would excuse him for occupying their time. With regard to the state of defence of that part of the coast with which he was acquainted, it was not his wish to make any observations which could convey any information to the enemy. Indeed it was not in his power because he was sure they were as well acquainted with the state of the coast as we were. They knew that many parts of it were unprotected, It was not a great many weeks ago (and the circumstance was known to one of his Majesty's ministers, who was not far from the place at the time), that a spy actually took a boat and went over to France, with two recruits for the enemy. He was happy to say, however, that measures had since been taken to prevent this. With regard to the volunteer force in general, he was perfectly convinced, that it would turn out completely efficient.—Upon this subject, he totally differed from a right hon. gentleman (Mr. Windham). He did not speak upon his own judgment, because he would never give an opinion upon a subject upon which he was incompetent to form one correctly, but he spoke from what he had heard from every officer with whom he had conversed, particularly the reviewing general.—From them he had never heard but one opinion, and that was, that they would do their duty as well as any regular troops.—Nothing certainly could be more desirable than to take every opportunity of bringing

small volunteer corps together, so as to act in battalion, and this he was convinced would not be so difficult as many gentlemen imagined.—He saw very lately 1,400 men assembled, many of whom had marched 13 or 14 miles; they went through their evolutions, and marched back again without a single murmur, though the weather was uncommonly severe.—He therefore hoped that every means would be used to bring them as often as possible into battalion. He was perfectly convinced, that they would not give way even in line before any troops to which they might be opposed. The only apprehension he entertained was, that if they were brought into action, they would be impetuous. If history was looked into, innumerable instances would be found where troops not so well disciplined or instructed had stood firm and defeated veteran troops. But even if they could not stand in line they would be of most important use as light troops and as rifle men. A friend of his who had seen a great deal of service, particularly in Holland and Egypt, declared, that during these campaigns he had not seen the French above twice in line. It was known that a great part of their troops consisted of tirailleurs, who were not used in line but as light troops. The hon. officer who spoke last had alluded to the possibility of the enemy effecting a landing. He by no means agreed with those who thought it was impossible for the French to escape our blockading squadrons. He believed it was impossible for any officer, however vigilant or skilful so completely to block up any port, as that it should be absolutely impracticable for the enemy by any accident to effect their escape. But if the enemy should escape, he begged the House to consider what a line of defence we had upon our own coasts. He had heard with great satisfaction that we had no less than 800 armed vessels employed for the defence of the coast. He could state from his own knowledge, that on that part of the coast with which he was acquainted, there were eighty of these vessels armed with carronades, ready to start from every creek to annoy the enemy on their approach; they were manned with men who perfectly understood the management of these vessels and were thoroughly acquainted with every inch of the coast, and he had no doubt, but they would very nearly destroy any flotilla the enemy could send, before they could make any impression upon our coast. If, therefore, the volunteers were encouraged, he had no doubt but that, with the assistance of that force to which he had just alluded, the country would be completely safe.

He was only anxious that the volunteers should meet with that encouragement and protection which they deserved.

Mr. *Secretary Yorke* entirely concurred in the opinion of the right hon. gent. who had just sat down; but thought the subject might be more properly discussed on the particular resolution, than on the report. The volunteers, in his own opinion, were not entitled to such allowances, either by the 42d or 43d of his Majesty, though the Board of Treasury had issued orders to the receivers general to make them, in case of volunteers called out on actual service. But if any doubt existed in the minds of other gentlemen on the subject, a clause to remove it might be introduced into the Bill now before the House, for amending the volunteer acts, which he proposed to have read a second time this day, in order that it should be committed tomorrow. Government had not called on the services of the volunteer corps to the extent that might have been thought desirable, from the difficulty of procuring accurate returns. The number now on duty, voluntarily was about 14,000. He was not aware of any thing more he had to say: when the resolution should be under the consideration of the House, he should take that opportunity of stating his opinion as to any observations it may give rise to.

Mr. *Pitt* did not mean to object to the Report, because he fully concurred in the resolutions contained in it, to the utmost of their extent. He rose only to correct some misstatements from misconception, which had been made of his sentiments on a former day. With respect to a proposition which he had thought it his duty to submit to the House, on that occasion, for the formation of volunteer corps into battalions, and the appointment of field officers to each battalion, one misconception had possibly arisen from his wish to save the time of the House, in not going at length into the explanation of his proposal. So far from having for its object the appointment of field officers, who were to have a control over the colonels commandants of the corps, nothing could be more repugnant to his feelings or sentiments. He had, he thought distinctly stated, that his sole and great object was, to afford the commandants of corps the benefit of the assistance and advice of officers not their superiors; but from experience competent to aid them effectually by their instruction; and the more he reflected, the more he was convinced of the advantages that would result from the adoption of his proposal. No commandant could look with confidence to the period of leading his men to actual

service, if refused the advice of professional men, capable, by their skill and experience, of promoting the discipline of their corps; and he took this opportunity, both on his own account, and on the behalf of others, who entertained the same sentiments with himself on the subject, to apply for such assistance. How far others may be disposed to accept such assistance, he could not take upon himself to say, but he should sincerely rejoice that other commandants of volunteer corps could go with confidence into action without such an advantage. He hoped, however, that if many should be found desirous of the benefit arising from the advice and assistance of experienced officers, they should not be deprived of it in consequence of an opposite opinion on the part of others. Another misconception was, that his wish was to make the regulation general, but he had never proposed extending the appointment of regular officers to any battalions, but those which should apply for them, and he sincerely hoped that all would do so. He had discharged his duty in submitting his proposition to the House, which he did not mean to press in the present instance; but, unless he should hear more weighty arguments against it than mere considerations of economy, or of its being likely to be unpopular, he should consider it his duty to persist in his object, which he looked upon as material to the most important interests of the country. How far the principle should be carried, he could not take upon himself to say, neither should he enter into a detailed consideration of the mode of applying it in every circumstance, because he was no friend to any general rule, any unbending maxim, where the variety of circumstances might, in many cases, render a departure from it necessary. He was sure, however, that too much attention could not be bestowed on the instruction and improvement of the volunteer force of the country in military discipline and evolutions; and he was persuaded, notwithstanding the opinion entertained by a right hon. friend opposite (Mr. Windham), that there were many regiments of volunteer corps already in a state of discipline to fit them for actual service, and whenever it should be necessary for them to act in line, that the volunteer corps would not be found the weakest part of the line. He should not consent to invert all the ordinary maxims of prudence, he should not let it be said, that they were making Acts of Parliament, putting the country to vast expense; and that, after all, what they had done was good for nothing, and absolutely inadequate to the purposes for which it was intended. He

looked upon the volunteers as completely capable, with proper attention, of rendering the country impregnable, but he must think, however, that the service, as light troops, which seemed to be most approved by gentlemen, for volunteers, in place of requiring less discipline, was that which required the highest degree of discipline. It was a simple operation to make them act in line, but it required a much higher state of discipline to enable troops, after suffering a temporary disorder to re-assemble with regularity and return to the attack. It was like a slow and regular machinery at first, which, by progressive improvement, might be afterwards advanced to the highest pitch of nicety and precision. He did not mean to enter further into the discussion, but, as an humble individual, he could not neglect this opportunity of putting in his claim on the part of those who are prepared to devote their lives in the cause of their country, that assistance should not be denied them in any instance of their applying for it. Let it not be said, that because we have three or four hundred thousand men, ready to act as armed peasants, that we are therefore satisfied. Neither should it be said, that because they had made considerable progress in military discipline, they had reached the perfection of military science. Much had been done, but much remained to be done, and it was only by constant, renewed, and active attention, that the common object of all was to be accomplished. By persevering in a wise system of instruction and discipline for the volunteers, every year would afford an additional improvement, which, in the end, would defeat every attempt of an inveterate enemy, would enable us to continue with spirit and confidence the contest in which we were engaged, tedious as it was likely to prove, and conduct us to a long series of years of secure and honourable peace. Thus much he had thought it necessary to say: he should only add, his conviction, though much more had been done, than some gentlemen were disposed to admit, much less had been effected than sanguine persons were too apt to suppose.

Mr. *Secretary Yorke* agreed with his right hon. friend (Mr. Pitt) in the opinion he entertained respecting the efficiency of the volunteer corps. He was also ready to admit, that every possible effort should be made to render them as perfect as possible in discipline. He, however, doubted much whether the proposition of his right hon. friend could be carried into effect to the extent he wished. Adjutants and serjeant-majors, he did not deny, ought to be appointed in every case

where the members of the corps required them, provided care were taken that none but proper and competent persons should be appointed, and that the places should be filled rather with a view to the public interest, than, as on former occasions, from favour. He feared it was impracticable to procure field officers from the line, if his hon. friend's plan were to be pursued, in sufficient numbers. There were 604 troops of cavalry, 102 companies of artillery, and 3,947 companies of volunteer infantry. The cavalry alone would require sixty field officers, and the others in proportion. The officers on the half-pay list had been provided for in the reserve, and many could not be procured from amongst those who had retired, many having been appointed inspecting officers of the volunteers. He was aware the right hon. gentleman would say that field officers would not be required for all the battalions; but as these should be taken from the regiments of the line, either field officers or the oldest captains, he thought it impracticable. Besides, he should be loth to interfere with officers of that description, who may be dissatisfied at their removal. In the next place, he was as little disposed to be deterred from the pursuit of a measure of national importance by the apprehension of its unpopularity as any hon. gentleman, yet he could not think it would be acting altogether fairly with the captains of volunteer corps, over whose heads field officers would necessarily be put, though they may not be superior to the colonels. Here the right hon. Secretary begged to remind the House of the conduct of Parliament last session with respect to the introduction of regular officers into the militia. They had authorized the admission of subalterns and captains; but they stopped short at field officers, and this appeared to him a kind of parliamentary barrier. He had himself, as a militia officer, and from having turned his thoughts particularly to the subject, entertained an opinion, that the introduction of regular officers, even field officers into the militia, would have promoted the efficiency of the regiments, and he had doubts of the policy of limiting the admission to captains and subalterns. He did not mean any disrespect to the militia in saying this. There was another objection, which, though not very material, ought not to be lost sight of, he meant the expense. Three hundred or three hundred and fifty would at least be necessary, and these would be placed on half pay at the end of the war, whereby they would lose their prospects of promotion in their profession.

Mr. *Pitt* said, he would take an opportunity of bringing forward his proposition on the resolution respecting the volunteers.

Mr. *Curwen*, as one who had mistaken the right hon. gent. (Mr. *Pitt*), declared himself satisfied with his explanation. He thought the appointment of field officers would be too expensive, but was of opinion, that adjutants and serjeant-majors should be appointed to battalions, and that the adjutants should have the rank of captain by brevet.—The report was then received. On the first resolution, that a force of 129,039 men be granted for guards and garrisons, being read,

Mr. *Pitt* expressed his satisfaction at so large a vote, but desired to be informed what the actual effective force of the country was at present, what its deficiency from the number in the vote, and what mode was proposed for supplying the deficiency?

Lord *Castlereagh* supposed the right hon. gentleman alluded to a statement of his on Friday; he had then stated the effective force of the United Kingdom to be 176,000 men, 80,000 of whom were militia, and of course 96,000 regulars, of whom 26,000 were only for limited service, so that the force for general service was 69,000 rank and file. The most material deficiency, therefore, was in the regulars. There were of the 50,000 of which the army of reserve was to be composed, 14 or 15,000 not yet raised, which arose from the time of the year at which the act passed, in harvest. In Ireland, too, it was later, but the execution of it was proceeding favourably at present, and if the country were to continue its efforts, that deficiency would soon be made up. The crown would have a discretion in promoting the recruiting of the regular army from the army of reserve, by allowing a bounty.

Mr. *Pitt* wished to be informed by what mode the deficiency, below the number voted, which, in his view, amounted to about 23,000, was proposed to be raised in a short time. He considered the reserve as regulars, though engaged only for limited service. As drummers and non-commissioned officers were not included, they, he supposed, might be considered equal to 9 or 10,000.

Lord *Castlereagh* replied, that the deficiency, making allowance for drummers, &c. did not exceed 20,000, which was to be made up by the 15,000 of the army of reserve, not yet raised, and by such modes as should be deemed most likely to promote the general service of recruiting. If the country would put its shoulders to the busi-

ness, there would be no reason, on the meeting of Parliament, to regret any deficiency. With this supply from the reserve, there would only be 5,000 deficient, and on the gross militia of the United Empire, there was only a deficiency of 8,000.

Mr. *Pitt* observed here that the army of reserve was by the act intended to have been raised in proportion to the population of the several districts, and no substitute was to have been received who should not be of the same, or of an adjacent county. The provisions of the act were violated whenever crimps were employed to procure substitutes, and considerable inconvenience was felt in many places, by adhering to the dispositions of the act. After a few words from the Secretary of War and Mr. Fuller, the resolution was agreed to.—The several other resolutions were then read and agreed to.—On the question being put on the last resolution relative to the volunteers,

Mr. *Pitt* said, he was sorry to be obliged on this resolution, again to address the House, on the subject of his proposition. The objections of the right hon. Sec. seemed to him to be founded on two or three grounds; first, a doubt whether a sufficient number of field officers could be procured; 2dly, an apprehension of creating discontent amongst the officers of the volunteer corps; and 3dly, the injury that the officers thus employed would sustain by being placed on half-pay after the war. The two first appeared inconsistent with each other. The first proceeded on a supposition that 4 or 500 would be necessary, and the second on the supposition that the corps would be dissatisfied; but as his proposition extended only to such as should apply, if there should not be many applications the first objection as to the number would be done away, and if many should apply as he hoped all would, then there could be no discontent, and the second objection vanished. But he maintained, that a sufficient number could be supplied from the line. Each regiment consisted of 750, had two lieut. colonels, two majors, and ten captains, and the question therefore would be, whether it was more material to the public security that every old regiment should have its number of old captains complete, or every battalion of 1,000 volunteers, have an efficient field officer to prepare them, by discipline, to accomplish the common object of all, the effectual defence and security of their country? But, if the regiments of the line could not afford the numbers necessary, the half-pay officers might be employed, or those who had retired from the service, or from amongst

those meritorious officers who had been in the India Company's service. As to the other circumstances of discontent, there would be reason to apprehend that there may be disappointment, if not discontent, should the application for such assistance be refused. As to the third objection, the awkward situation to which the appointment would reduce the officers, by exposing them to be placed on half-pay, and interfering with their promotion, he could not, in his view of the question, admit such a conclusion. He could not perceive why such officers might not be in as fair a situation to be promoted to vacancies as if employed in any other way.—There was another general subject on which the Right Hon. Sec. had touched, though he had applied it somewhat whimsically. He had stated as his opinion, that the admission of regular officers into militia regiments was a wise measure, and he was even disposed to go further than the legislature had done; it was fair then to turn his personal judgment against himself, and insist that with such an opinion he cannot consistently object to the proposition, for if regular officers were of great benefit to the militia, they must, of course, be equally so to the volunteers, and he had no hesitation in saying, that though he thought the decision of Parliament right, he now with his eyes open, asserted it was erroneous. He therefore hoped that gentlemen would not object to the proposition; he would not, however, press it then; but unless he should understand it to be the intention of his Majesty's government to adopt some such regulation, he would bring it forward again hereafter.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* considered the reasons advanced by his right hon. friend, against adopting the proposition to its full extent satisfactory. He concurred in the principle, but he had doubts of its practicability. The number of volunteers in the united empire was 430,000, which if formed into battalions of 500 each, and from local circumstances a greater number could not be assembled, would require 860 field officers. He admitted that the right hon. gent. (Mr. Pitt), had distinctly stated battalions, not corps, on a former occasion.—The half-pay could not supply any officers, the whole on that establishment having been appointed to the reserve. It would, therefore, be necessary to resort to the regulars. The whole amount of the regiments in the united kingdom was 70; there were 25 or 26 regiments of cavalry; but taking the whole at 100, to supply 860 each battalion should

afford eight officers. Though the right hon. gent. had distinctly mentioned captains, not field officers, it would be admitted, that they should be men not only of military acquirements, but of temper, and address to manage with effect so vast a force. He had considerable doubt in his mind, concerning a measure that would go to take its very essence from the army. Besides the individuals themselves would quit reluctantly, nor though employed in the same glorious cause, would they be satisfied with the same species of renown which they might acquire in acting with the volunteers, and therefore he did not think it right to take from the army, persons unwilling to commute their services. He had some doubt as to the application of the principle, because, from what had come to his knowledge within the last four days, he had reason to think, that the corps would not be satisfied that regular officers should be ingrafted on their original body; their original institution was to serve under officers with whom they were connected by every tie of intimacy and acquaintance, and, therefore, the proposition, with respect to them, involved an awkward alternative. He knew, if it was put to them, they possibly might not object to it, though, at the same time, it might create a degree of discontent, which could never have been in the contemplation of the right hon. gent. who had brought forward the question. On these grounds he entertained doubts as to the principle, though he was prepared to admit that every effort ought to be made to give greater efficiency to the volunteer corps and to give some more confidence in going into action. He could not help thinking the House indebted to the right hon. gent. for his suggestion, as well as for that respecting adjutants, which had been adopted, and produced much good effect. Another suggestion of the right hon. gent. also for brigading small corps, under generals from the regular forces, was likely to be attended with much benefit. These generals, and their respective staffs, would be a drain from the line equal to what it could bear. The Chancellor of the Exchequer then adverted to the admission of regular officers into the militia, which was chiefly composed of substitutes. The same regulation did not apply to the volunteers, because the chief object was to preserve the genuine relations between the officers and privates, and therefore, the introduction of regular officers amongst them was much more liable to objection than in the militia, where the prevalence of substitutes

weakened that connection.—As he was up he should take the opportunity of adverting to the deficiency in the military, which, he was happy to say, was, in an unprecedented degree, small; and the most effectual measures were to be taken to fill it up, so that when Parliament should next meet, gentlemen would have no reason to regret any deficiency. In the artillery, which consisted of 13,000, there were not more than 480 deficient, and measures would be taken to fill up the deficiency in the regulars with all possible despatch.

Mr. *Windham* did not mean to trouble the house at any length, after what he had said on a former occasion; but, as many topics were then omitted, and some important suggestions had since been made, he thought it not wholly unnecessary to say a few words,—His right hon. friend under the gallery (Mr. Pitt), had explained and enforced, with his usual ability, the measures which he had wished to see adopted for the improvement of the volunteer system; observing, with too much truth, that his ideas in that respect were diametrically opposite to those of Mr. *Windham*. He lamented the fact, and not the less sincerely, because it must happen in consequence, that *his* ideas must be diametrically opposite to those of his right hon. friend. It was always painful to him to differ from his right hon. friend, with whom he so generally agreed; and independent of that feeling, there was commonly the further cause of regret, that his opinion, so opposed, had less chance of being received. It was not on that account, however, less necessary, that he should state the grounds, on which his opinion was formed.—His objections certainly did not arise from any general feeling adverse to voluntary service. On the contrary, he had always strongly declared himself in favour of voluntary service, as opposed to that which was compulsory: but voluntary service did not necessarily mean service of volunteer corps, such as they were now constituted. Here and there, perhaps, the cases might concur. One of the corps which he should have looked to, though resembling in some degree those to which he was objecting, was the corps to which his right hon. friend was at the head: and which had contributed, probably not a little, to lead him to the ideas which he now entertained respecting volunteer corps in general. This was a corps, formed in peculiar circumstances, and with peculiar advantages both in respect of its leader, and of the men of whom it was composed. His right hon. friend was not

to conclude that what could be done by himself, circumstanced too as he was, could be done by any other commander, and with respect to any ordinary corps. His right hon. friend had at once his own personal powers, his general authority in the country, and the authority of his high provincial office. He had a people to deal with rendered tractable by a more immediate exposure to the danger, and animated with something of a peculiar character, and peculiar duties. It was the experience of what might be done in these particular circumstances, which had misled, as he conceived, his right hon. friend in his ideas of this service in general. For his part, he must confess, that the notions which he entertained, and the conclusions which he was led to draw, were altogether different. He must object to the volunteer system; first, as being very ill-adapted to the principal and more immediate purpose, for which it was wanted; as increasing most materially the difficulties of recruiting the army; as being liable to have a most injurious influence on the character and conduct of the army; as infringing the just claims, and violating the reasonable feelings, of military men, by confounding those distinctions which they had hitherto enjoyed exclusively, and effecting a general depreciation of military titles and honours, as confounding the ranks and gradations in civil life, while it disturbed and deranged the ordinary functions of society; and lastly, as liable to become a source of great future political danger, such as might be apprehended always, from great bodies of armed men subject to no military control, and whose constitution at this moment was, in innumerable instances, precisely that which would be most likely to give birth to such danger, and to render it formidable, were it to take place. A proof of this he would give to the house, (since he perceived in some parts expressions of incredulity,) by producing the constitution of one of the principal corps in this city, which had been recently furnished to him, and which he had in his pocket. It would appear by this, that the corps was governed, not by officers approved and appointed by his Majesty, but by committees and sub-committees, so constructed, as that it might happen continually that questions the most important to the proceedings and well being of the corps, might be decided by a *quorum* in which there should be *six* privates to one officer. Any thing more completely democratical, or better supplied with all the apparatus usually provided for such purposes, could not have been furnished by

any of the dealers in constitutions to be found in the Corresponding Society. It was impossible, therefore, to look at these institutions, however full of zeal and loyalty at present, and to reflect on what they might become hereafter, without a considerable degree of jealousy and uneasiness. One effect of their power was already apparent in the complete conquest which they had obtained over his Majesty's ministers. It was plain, that the hon. gentleman (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) did not dare to stir a step respecting them, without first asking their leave. It was whimsical to see the embarrassment in which he was placed, between his fear of rejecting a proposition coming from the right hon. gent. behind him (Mr. Pitt), and the greater dread of offending the volunteers. Both were objects of terror, and the combination of the two fears seemed likely to produce a kind of oblique course in the right hon. gent., that would satisfy neither one side nor the other. This was not the natural situation for a government to be placed in. A military measure, before it was adopted, might, with great propriety, be referred to those, who were likely to have a good judgment in military affairs; but the question referred would be, "what is good upon the whole for the interests of the state or of the army?" not, as in the present case, "what do the soldiers or officers like?" Such, however, was the ascendancy which the volunteer body already had over the government! He wished they might be able to prevail as easily over the legions of Buonaparte. If they would, he should be inclined, for one, to overlook all other dangers that might be apprehended from them. He would shut his eyes to consequences, and "jump the life to come," if he could be satisfied that the system, as at present established, was calculated to answer its grand purpose, that of the defence of the country against a foreign enemy.—It seemed to be admitted, that it was not so at present; though it was hoped it might become so under the alterations proposed by his right hon. friend. He was fain to confess, that he despaired of the efficacy of these alterations. It was not that he did not see the advantage of having an intelligent regular officer attached to a volunteer corps, or the improvement which the corps would receive by the effect of greater training. But how were these advantages to be obtained? And what, after all, would they produce? Among the difficulties of obtaining part of these advantages, viz. the assistance of regular officers, must be stated, not only the

consent of the corps, which did not appear, by what had been said that night, to be quite a thing of course, but the consent of the officers; and when to insure this latter, it was proposed that rank should attach to these appointments, a most material objection arose on account of the effect which such a system would be likely to have on the character and discipline of the army. A more mischievous thing could not well be conceived, than to let loose, among the army, a wild spirit of speculation, similar to that which was so fatally opened at the beginning of the late war by the measure of raising men for rank, and to put half the officers of the army upon seeking advancement in their profession, not by foreign service, not by professional skill, not by a strict discharge of their regimental duties, nor by the approbation and good will of their commanders, but by interest and recommendation among the colonels, (or committees) of volunteer corps. The evil of such a state of things would reach to a greater extent, and operate in more directions, than might at first be supposed. It would unsettle the minds of officers; it would disturb the discipline of regiments; it would weaken the useful dependence of officers upon their superiors; it would injure the military character; it would relax the zeal and spirit of the army by opening a new channel to advancement independent of service or military merit; it would produce discouragement and discontent, by new examples of men, who had succeeded in reaching the honours, by deserting the duties, of their profession. If this was the view of the measure, in respect to the army, it would not be very promising on the other hand, with respect to the volunteer corps, for whom, certainly, it would not procure that class of officers, (it was to be hoped so at least) who would be likely to render them the greatest service. But when the best was done in procuring aid of this sort, what, after all, could be the effects which it could produce upon corps constituted as those in question must necessarily be? To give opportunity for the exertions of these officers, an augmentation was to be made in the number of days of training; but, besides the insufficiency of the time proposed, great as it might be, to give to men the expertness, and much more, the general habits and character of soldiers, was it considered, how far the assembling men in this way would be practicable; and what the inconvenience would be, could it be effected? Here came in the great and insurmountable difficulty in the attempting to give to vo-

lunteer corps the form and character of regular troops. Without embodying there could be neither discipline nor training; and how was it to be supposed, that men engaged in the common avocations of life, and who never meant to enter into service as a means of livelihood, could continue long embodied? Every attempt of this sort was an attempt against the nature of things. *Ex quo vis ligno &c.*; or, to take the English version, 'you could not make a silk purse out of a sow's ear,' you could not make that hard-cutting instrument called an army, out of a mass of inhabitants, residents, householders, men with families, men with property, men engaged in trades and callings: though for purposes of local defence, and with a view to special services, they might be willing to enrol themselves into volunteer corps. He had wished, therefore, that the attempt should never originally have been made; and upon the same principle was equally adverse to all expedients and contrivances, for the purpose of assisting it; being persuaded, that it never could succeed.—Had the volunteers been willing, or, more properly, had they been advised or permitted, to assume the character of an armed peasantry, and to have trained themselves accordingly, they would not only have been far more useful, but would have been free from the inconveniences now chargeable upon these corps in the form in which they at present subsisted. One of these he had already described to be, the factious tendency which they might discover hereafter, and the general dangers to be apprehended from bodies of armed men, subject to no military control. But an evil more immediate, and more certain, though somewhat more confined, was to be apprehended from their effects upon the army. These were of several sorts. The first and most obvious was the reduction made in those numbers, from which the militia and army of reserve were to be supplied; the latter body being the only fund from which they could now look to recruit the army. 400,000 men, who, if it was hoped to make soldiers of them, must be considered as men capable of military service, could not all be persons, whom no temptation could induce to enter into the army, or who, if drawn for the militia or army of reserve, would all decline to serve in person. Such a portion, therefore, of the active population of the country could not be withdrawn and set apart, and other services not be the worse for it. The inconvenience would certainly be augmented, by measures such as those recommended by his right hon. friend, and in

general by whatever tended to give to the volunteer corps more of the shape and air of regular troops. Volunteer captains or colonels might not care much at present about restraining their men from entering into other services, nor feel very confident, probably, as to the powers they possessed for that purpose. But in proportion as the corps improved in appearance and regularity, these powers, if they existed, would be ascertained and exerted; or if taken away, would be followed by the same complaints, which had been heard from militia colonels, that they would not submit to become recruiters for the army. Such could hardly fail to be the effect of the volunteer system in respect to the recruiting the army. But were there no effects which might be apprehended with respect to its discipline and character? The volunteers were, to be sure, and necessarily must be, so inferior to the regular army, that little possibly might be apprehended from their example. Men were not apt to take examples from those whom they did not look up to. But it must be remembered, that what was wanting in authority, might be made up in numbers. Between volunteers and militia, the notion of a regular army had nearly dropped from their minds. They hardly inquired what it was or where it was to be found. It seemed to be the least part of the national defence: *Pars minima est ipsa puella sui*. It was so enveloped and hid in the force of various kinds that surrounded it, that it might be all withdrawn, and for a long while its removal not be perceived. But was there no danger, that in this state, forgotten by others, it might at last forget itself, and feel by degrees the contagion of that mass under which it was thus concealed and buried? A long communication with troops, who with appearances the same were, in habits, notions, constitution, and practices, so widely at variance with all that was military, might in time produce an effect even on the regular army.—He would not dilate upon this danger; but advert to an effect, which, though of a less alarming, perhaps less important nature, was not undeserving of consideration, viz. the immense depreciation which these institutions must produce in the value of military titles and honours; honours which were, heretofore, confined to military men, but were now lavished among persons, having no pretensions to that character. It would hardly be said, that this could be of no consequence, for that after all, every man knew his own value, and that the difference between regular and irregular service would still be the same, however external distinctions might be confounded. He should be

glad to try this with respect to other honours. He should be glad to know from his right hon. friend, or from the hon. gentleman opposite to him, whether the candidates for peerages, and baronetcies, for red and blue ribands, would be satisfied on being told, that these distinctions could be no object to them, as they would neither make them richer nor wiser, nor more powerful, nor confer or declare any quality that was not equally possessed and equally known, at the moment of their application? Whether the present holders of these honours, would be perfectly well pleased, or *were* perfectly well pleased, at seeing them become as cheap and common as most of them, it must be confessed, had of late years been made? Yet the complaint in this case would be far less reasonable than in the other. It was much more easy to conceive, why an officer, with only his pay to live on, with no place perhaps in society but what his commission gave, and with nothing to announce his commission but the riband in his hat, or the title by which he was addressed, should be tenacious of these distinctions; distinctions earned through many a hard day's service; then why men, possessed apparently of all that fortune could give, should be pining after honours, which to the eyes of ordinary observers could add so little either to their happiness or consequence. A great peer, it might be thought, could better dispense with a riband, or a great commoner with a peerage, so far as distinction was concerned, than a soldier of fortune with those tokens and titles, which were to distinguish him in the eyes of strangers, and which being withdrawn or confounded, left him without distinction of any kind. But these things were not only relatively great, great to the officer, who had probably nothing else either to supply their place, or to console him for the want of them; they were in themselves distinctions, which all mankind would agree to value, and of which it would be much easier to explain the value, than of many of those which were more eagerly pursued. Formerly, he who bore the title of captain or colonel, could be no other than a man belonging to an honourable profession, who, if not in the prime of life, must, probably, have been an actor in scenes, which every one would be glad to have shared in; and have displayed qualities, which those who most felt to possess them, would still be happy to have evinced by trial. His title afforded presumption of a character, which the common feelings of mankind would never suffer to be regarded but with respect. Could the same be said of every other honour? Of which, nevertheless, the

extension and depreciation would be considered as a ground of complaint. No one certainly could look down upon an honour, which implied that the person attaining it had been accepted on the part of his Sovereign. But, since in this as in other instances, the Sovereign would not act but by advice, nothing was really proved in these cases but the protection and favour of the minister, which might evince the political power of the party, but neither was, nor pretended to be, an evidence of any thing else. Let it not be said, therefore, that those who reduced the value of military distinctions, took from officers, and from the army, nothing but what they ought to part with, with indifference. If this were so, every title, order, medal, decoration of whatever sort, was a mere toy and plaything, which none but trifling minds could value, and which might be dispensed from henceforth to whoever would take it, without the least regret on the part of those, by whom, till then, it had been enjoyed.—Whether the loss of this distinction had excited any regret on the part of the army, was more than he could pretend to say. Very possibly it had not; though the effects in time would not be the less felt. But that the distinction was in fact lost, could be no longer matter of dispute. A witty lady of the last age, the mother of a venerable marquis equally distinguished for his talents, was reported to have said, upon some great creation of peers, that she was afraid to spit out of her window, lest what fell at the moment should happen to light upon a peer. A similar apprehension might be felt in the present circumstances respecting officers. There could not be a company assembled of half a dozen persons, in which the chance was not, that one of the number was an officer. He himself was a captain: it was probable, that before long he should be a colonel. When such was the facility of creating officers, the numbers could not fail to be considerable. He would not revert again to the feelings of those (if they happened to have any care upon the subject), who having embraced the army as a profession, and served in every quarter of the world, should find themselves suddenly lost in a crowd of officers, who had never seen, or were likely to see a day's service, and who, like himself, had nothing military but the name.—These were some of the objections to the volunteer system, as it respected the army. But its effects on the community at large were far from inconsiderable. It was attended with great expense: it created much individual embarrassment: it mixed in a manner

by no means desirable, the several ranks and orders of society: it disturbed, to a degree highly incommodious, many of the functions of common life; and would do so yet further, if the plan was pursued of giving to these corps a still more regular consistency. He would not pursue these topics severally and in detail: but to one he could not but advert, as it was connected more immediately with the suggestions which had been made that night. It was a great mistake to suppose that in withdrawing men from their avocations and employments it was easier and better to take the labour of many partially, than of a few altogether. The contrary was in general the fact. Men removed altogether were replaced by others, who filled up the void which they had left; and society after a while went on as usual. A man who enlisted, was like a man dead. It was rare that his place remained long unoccupied; that the pening made was not soon closed. But not so with the man, whose employment was only suspended, who was to be called away for awhile, as in the plan proposed, and then to go back to his occupation, with all the inconvenience of having left it, and all the difficulty possibly of resuming it at his return. If he was an artizan or small tradesman, his neighbour had run away with his business: if he was a journeyman or farmer's servant his master had provided himself with a new man: his employers and customers in the meanwhile had been wanting his labour: there would be a period, during which, they could not either have had him to work or to deal with; nor have been able to supply his place by another. He would himself at the end of this have his livelihood to seek; for he would not like the soldier have found a provision in his new profession. Nothing would, therefore, be found for the most part to answer less in practice, than this notion of taking part of the labour and leaving the remainder, of employing the man during part of his time in learning the business of a soldier, and leaving him at the end to return to his ordinary occupations. It was as impossible to take half the man, as to kill half a sheep. When it came to the question of an embodied force, or anything beyond armed peasantry, it seemed infinitely better, both for the individual and the public, that the man should be either entirely a soldier or not at all; and should not be left in that mixed intermediate state, in which he would be fit for neither capacity, would be just enough of a soldier to be spoiled for a peasant or artizan, and too much of a peasant or artisan (or whatever else he happened to be), to admit of his becoming a valuable or well-trained

soldier. As to the expense of a force thus composed, it could not be better illustrated than by what had been said by an hon. gentleman (Mr. Rose) of the provision to be made for the families of these men during their time of exercise. His idea that in virtue of this training, they would, if employed as light infantry, be as well qualified to encounter the enemy as any troops in his Majesty's service, was a little contrary to received opinions, and very contrary to the opinion of his right hon. friend near him (Mr. Pitt), who had described the service of light infantry, and in many respects truly, as that which required more training than any other. If zeal and courage were all in all, as in some parts of his speech the hon. gentleman seemed to think, no training at all would be necessary. And this was in some degree his (Mr. Windham's) opinion. He thought that so little, after all, could be done by the sort of training now attempted to be given to the volunteers, and that the evils and inconveniences attending the attempt were so great, that he wished this species of training to be foreborne altogether; and that the country should content itself with that, which, while it contained what was by far the most essential, would be attended, comparatively, with no expense, no loss of time, no interruption to the common business and avocations of life. Such a course of proceeding was, as he conceived, better both upon the whole, and certainly so, with a view to the crisis of the moment, which could not wait the slow return of any long and circuitous method. The illustration used by an hon. gentleman, the other night (Mr. Fox), was so happy, that it might seem almost to be conclusive. If the question was of instructing a person thoroughly in the knowledge of any language you would begin, of course, by the usual methods, and as the first step, ground him well in his *accidence*. But if the call was pressing, and the time limited, and the occasion such as required no profound or critical knowledge, but so much acquaintance only with the current language as might suffice for the purposes of a journey or a short tour, you would be intent upon teaching first the most necessary words and phrases, and proceed to other things as time and opportunity might allow. In the present instance he was satisfied, that not merely on account of the urgency of the occasion, but from the nature of the subject, another and more simple kind of training, was that which ought to have been adopted. But at all events, and under whatever mode of training, the form and constitution of the corps

should have been such, as not to interfere with the supply of other more regular and more important services. If it was too late to provide entirely against the continuance of the evil at that time incurred, care should at least be taken that it was not increased in future. Whatever was due to the volunteers in point of good faith must be strictly fulfilled. To what extent that went he was not prepared to say. But nothing certainly could require, that exemptions should be extended to those who might enter from that time forwards, and that no such exemptions, therefore, ought on any account to be granted.

Mr. *Erskine*.—I have listened, Sir, to the right hon. gent. under the gallery (Mr. Pitt) with much attention; to most of his sentiments respecting the volunteers with perfect satisfaction, and certainly if ever there was a subject which more than another, claims the attentive consideration of Parliament, it is that which now forms the matter in discussion, and which involves the means of providing for the defence of the empire. At the same time, I cannot help observing, that to a mind less enlightened than that of the right hon. gent. on the lower bench (Mr. Windham), it ought to have occurred, that this was a subject which ought to be discussed with moderation and temper; that the house was called upon to deliberate upon measures for the security of the country; and that it was not quite becoming in any member, under such circumstances, to enter into vain and splenetic criticisms on the past. Whatever may have been the imperfections of the volunteers, it cannot be maintained, by any sober thinking mind, that this is a moment at which they ought to be disbanded. Does the right hon. gent. mean to recommend that these valuable troops should be dismissed, and that our defence should be left entirely to the care of the regular army? Is it possible that he can seriously urge any thing so exceptionable, so absurd? and yet if such are not his views, why persevere in depreciating the volunteers, in endeavouring to make them think little of themselves, and to make the enemy despise them. Whatever the object of the right hon. gent. may be, certain it is, that the tendency of his language is to encourage the attempt of invasion, and to depress the spirit of those who are ready to oppose it. Really it is difficult to understand the views of the right hon. gent. Does he reflect upon the probable consequences of his conduct? Or does he mean to utter opinions in that House, in order to encourage others to publish out of

it the same opinions, and write in support of them?

Mr. *Windham* here called the hon. gent. to order, and told him, that before he ventured to state anything in that house as a fact applying to any member, he ought to have taken care to ascertain how far it was well founded.

Mr. *Erskine* continued:—I assert, Sir, that the sentiments of the right hon. gent. are likely to be productive of great mischief, and hold out an encouragement to the licenser of the press. Indeed, from what I have heard of the right hon. gentleman's observations, I apprehend that any man who should dare to print what the right hon. gentleman said, would be guilty of a misdemeanour. I apprehend that the man who would disparage the whole military force of his country, who would consider it as in a state of the greatest danger, and who would maintain that all we have done for our country is only likely to involve us in ruin, and is founded on a system so mistaken in its principles as to lead to destruction rather than to safety—such a man, I say, is a fit object for animadversion and censure. I do not mean to say, that the right hon. gentleman's sentiments in that House are cognizable in a court of law, but that the repetition of such remarks out of doors would be subject to reprehension. The first matter I take into consideration is this:—we are to see what the situation of the country was when war was declared against France. Our military force was not then sufficient to put the country in a state of security; considering the immense armies of France, and the determination of the person at the head of the French government to use means for our destruction which never were carried so nearly into effect as those that now threaten the country. At the time when the war commenced it was necessary, as we could not foresee whether the attempt would be made, that we should receive the voluntary offers of persons coming forward for the general defence. The right hon. gent. says, he considers this as an armed democracy. I cannot conceive how it is an armed democracy when it consists of all ranks of men, and some of the greatest and most opulent men in the country, all of whom receive commissions from the crown. When compulsory measures are resorted to; the men may desert; when you take men by force into the field, you cannot have the same reliance upon them as when their efforts are spontaneous and free. By the present system all the influences of society are bound up toge-

ther; each man is as much pledged to his companions in arms as he is to his king and country; each man feels he would dishonour himself, if, after having volunteered his services, he should depart from the sacred pledge he had given. On the contrary, if led out by force, he might say, I gave no pledge, I was dragged to the standard; but coming forward of his own accord, his honour, character, and consistency are interested, and impel him to conduct himself in such a manner as his pledge demands. With regard to the situation of volunteer corps, no man can say that a system which extends to the whole population of the country is not necessarily attended with some difficulty. No man can say, we are not in a choice of difficulties; but the question is this, and I feel myself much in unison with the right hon. gent. over the way (Mr. Pitt), at least with a very small shadow of difference. The right hon. gent. is a friend to the volunteer system, and he has furnished a proof himself and by his own example, that it is not necessary to do what he recommends. I understand he has acquired considerable military knowledge, and has conducted his corps to a high state of perfection. I apprehend it does not require so much military skill for the inferior situations of the army as many seem to imagine; you must have persons accustomed to the forms and manœuvres so as to be able to teach the duty of a soldier. You must take care in the choice of officers, not to appoint those who consider the distinction as a matter of vanity, and not as a pledge of duty; but it does not appear to me that it requires such a degree of military skill in the lower orders of the army as to call on government to put itself to such an expence as is proposed. It is supposed, that peasantry, if armed, would do all that is necessary for the light infantry service. Though I do not profess much knowledge of a military life, having been at an early period only in a subaltern capacity, yet I do know you cannot acquire and put in execution those manœuvres which constitute the excellency of light infantry, without being acquainted with the manœuvres of the line. It is a system by which you learn to throw yourself into apparent irregularity, which shall be perfect regularity. It is supposed the minutiae of regularity is unnecessary. I deny that there is anything the volunteers are invited to do, for the purpose of being brigaded and formed, which is not absolutely essential in the practice of war. I would ask any gentleman who is a soldier, whether it would be possible to lead a corps into action, unless it was able, with preci-

sion, and without confusion, to form lines into columns, to make it increase or diminish, change front, and alter the position in any way which might be necessary for actual service. All this knowledge lies in a narrow compass, it is easily learnt by degrees, it may be taught by sergeants, and when it is taught, every thing must depend on the competency of the person. I have no reason to think that the volunteer corps are not capable of performing the most essential service, if they are kept up with the respect due to them, and if they are treated with the regard to which their exertions entitle them. I, for one, should have no objection to receiving any field officer; but there is this difficulty, it is said, the commanding should invite the appointment of the field officer. Now it ought to be considered that he has no authority to do so, without submitting the proposition to his men who have the choice of all the officers. If you introduce a field officer, by the invitation of the colonel, without consulting the corps, you break in upon the choice which the men originally had. However, as there is no proposition of this sort, I forbear commenting on it. We are here on the volunteer system itself. The question is, whether we are to abandon it or limit it? Whether, we are to admit we are wrong; and that all our efforts have not benefitted the country. With regard to another point, it does not strike me that the military profession will be at all injured by this system. The officers of volunteer corps have no permanent rank; though they have the titles of colonel, lieutenant colonel, captain, and lieutenant, they are merely to give respect, and confer no rank. I should think, that so far from these titles giving offence to gentlemen of the profession, the army must feel the greatest satisfaction at the idea, that instead of not being well supported, instead of having their front to the enemy and disaffection in their rear, they are surrounded by the whole country, affording them every assistance they can require; for, let me ask, what would an army, brave as it is, do, if columns of the enemy were to land in Devonshire, Sussex, Hampshire, and other counties at the same time? Could a regular army stop their progress without infinite mischief? Is it not then of advantage to have the inhabitants of the country, not a low rabble, but in all their gradations, voluntarily armed in aid of the army, their officers accepting their commissions from the crown, and much of this force acting without receiving any emolument whatever. I am ready to admit that great evils may

attend this system, but while you have such an enemy, with such a population, with such arms, and with such a determination to destroy this country, it is the best means of defence that can be resorted to. The great object of the volunteer system is, that the men may acquire, not the same discipline as the regular army, not the same steadiness, not the same experience, not the same firmness, but at least to the spirit and feeling of soldiers, that regularity acquired by constant habits of discipline, which is necessary to enable them to give efficient support to the army. If we desired you to discourage the army, and to look to the volunteer system only, then I admit that many of the arguments opposed to the volunteer system would be properly opposed; but the question is, whether it is not a most fortunate circumstance for the country, that of the people, by a glorious and spontaneous effort, coming forward as one man, and submitting to every privation for the purpose of giving that protection for which they have been appealed to? The question is, whether it would have been prudent in his Majesty's government not to have received the offers of the volunteer corps, and whether they would have been justified had they not limited the system in the manner they have done. It would have been dangerous to have accepted every offer, as it would have prevented that force from being supplied which is indispensably necessary; but with regard to those which have been accepted, I think it would be the greatest calamity if the volunteers were to relax their diligence, and not do everything to accomplish themselves for the important duties they have undertaken to perform. I shall be glad to hear any proposition that will enable them more effectually to perform it. However, what I rose principally for, was to state to the house, that I apprehend we are not here to consider what would have been better; but whether, in the state the country is, it is prudent to discharge the volunteer force, to consider it as dangerous, inefficient, and useless, and to infer, that after all our exertions the country is in no degree delivered from its danger. For my own part, I consider the country as impregnable; I look upon the volunteer force as that which has given pause to France. I admit we must not relax our vigilance; we must advance in discipline, and give to our system all the improvement of which it is capable; we must avail ourselves of that force which we derive from the spontaneous efforts of the people, which is not dictated to, but takes its own course. We are here to determine, whether we are altogether on a wrong system, and instead of

putting the country in a state of security, whether we have not exposed it to other dangers; finally, whether we had not better trust to an armed peasantry to resist an enemy, that every moment is acquiring additional vigour and strength. I repeat, I do not profess the skill and knowledge of an officer, but I do not think there is that mystery in the military service which may not be learned by men determined to be instructed and improved under the discipline of general officers, with the assistance of being inspected and brigaded. What has already been done? Was there any power in any officer to bring the volunteers into the field to be brigaded at all? Yet we have seen with what readiness they have come forward. As there was nothing in the formation of the corps that entitled any one to call out a single volunteer, with his musket on his shoulder, except his own officer, what reason is there to suppose that they will not all show the same alacrity they have done, if they should feel that it would be for their advantage? I have only to add, that if government give proper directions to those small bodies of men, who have no field officers at the public expense, I see no reason why the system may not be improved. The question is, whether we are to retard our steps, repent of what we have done, make a new system of defence, and disparage the efforts of our volunteers by the adoption of such language in Parliament as has been used this night?

Mr. Pitt rose in explanation: he did not mean, he said, that the field officers whom he proposed to add to volunteer corps, should be placed over the commanders, but should be subordinate to them.—As to the circumstance of a commanding officer's applying to his corps for their consent, it never entered into his contemplation. He had heard that night, for the first time, of a committee for the regulation and management of corps, and he had heard it with regret, as he conceived that such corps could never be well disciplined, and could never be made either useful or energetic. With respect to the corps which he had the honour to command, the fact was, that whatever superiority of discipline it had acquired, it went in support of his suggestion, as it was entirely to be attributed to the assistance of regular officers of ability, whose exertions had been unremitting in bringing the corps to that state of discipline.

Mr. Courtenay declared, that he never heard such an extravagant speech from the right hon. gent (Mr. Windham), even when he was a minister, as he had delivered this evening; men seldom improved in extra-

vagance after they had been deprived of power; but such seemed to be the case with the right hon. gent.; however, with respect to the right hon. gentleman's sentiments upon the subject of the volunteers, it appeared that after a great variety of distinctions and super-distinctions, his object was to depreciate that force, of whom two of the most skilful and gallant officers in the British service, had spoken in the highest terms of praise; the one, Lord Hutchinson, stating his opinion, that they would overwhelm a French army, if directed to a vigorous and prompt attack, similar to that which the suddenly raised levies of the Swiss made upon the first detachment of the French troops: this noble lord said, that if invaded, the contest with the invader must be short, and he would stake his life upon the issue of such an assault; the observation of Lord Moira to the Scotch volunteers, was well known. Indeed, the opinions of these two celebrated generals, were those of all experienced men in the country who had any opportunity of judging. The right hon. gent. stood alone; his sentiment was completely singular. He decided, however, from theory, for had he seen the 28,000 men who assembled in Hyde Park, he must have changed his opinion. But at that time he was seeking the distinction of a command in a volunteer corps in Norfolk—a distinction he argued against this evening as so mischievous. But as to democracy, he could not help saying, that this was the queerest part of the right hon. gentlemen's charge upon the volunteers, for he appealed to the House, whether there was one other man in the country, except himself, who would accuse the right hon. gent. or ministers, of being likely to favour democracy? What, he would ask, would the right hon. gent. propose to do with the volunteers? Would he have them quit being volunteers in order to make peasantry of them? and how would he provide a force for the defence of the country? But really the right hon. gent. who was himself an officer in a volunteer corps, and aspiring to the rank of colonel, could not be serious in the objections he made to the volunteer institution. If he was, instead of applying to him the quotation, "His own example strengthened all his laws;" it should be "His own example weakened all his laws."—But no doubt, as a military man, he would soon have to "change his position," which he had contrived to do as a politician. "However," observed the hon. member, "let the right hon. gent. change as he may, I shall con-

tinue to esteem the volunteers, among whom I should be happy to enrol myself; and, as the right hon. gent. under the gallery (Mr. Pitt) has so well trained a corps under his command, I would be glad to enter into his service. I have served for many years as a private in the ranks against him, and now I am ready, if the French should attempt to approach our shores, to offer him my services, and hope he will accept of them."

Dr. Laurence supported Mr. Windham's arguments. On the subject of changing sides and doctrines, no person he said, had varied so much as his hon. and learned friend (Mr. Erskine), who spoke now quite in an opposite strain from that which he held in the last war. He condemned the ideas of military obedience which the volunteer corps had formed. Some of them engaged to obey all lawful commands of their officers, reserving of course to themselves the right of judging the legality, than which nothing could be more foreign to the character of a soldier. He did not distrust English valour, but he thought half discipline a dangerous thing. He could not be thoroughly satisfied with a force which required so much to be done to keep it in good humour. All that had been said went to prove, that we should have in the volunteers, good-humoured soldiers, and amiable captains. If the great talents of the right hon. gent. opposite (Mr. Pitt) were not sufficient to make him an officer without experience, what was to be expected from others? The present enormous bounties were a grievous evil; and to this they were to be imputed. The learned doctor concluded with again impressing the arguments of his right hon. friend Mr. Windham.

Lord Castlereagh wished merely to state the fact as to the charge that the present military system destroyed the ordinary recruiting.—He ventured, on the general impression he had, to deny the fact. The ordinary recruiting was impaired in some little degree, but it was stated beyond what the fact would warrant. Seven thousand five hundred men had been received into the line from the Army of Reserve; the ordinary recruiting in the same period had produced 6,791 men. The gross amount of recruits for the line was, therefore, 14,291 men. This was enough to remove the impression that the recruiting of the line was confined to the army of reserve. The recruiting, compared with any former period, would be found not deficient. Last year, there was no recruiting for the militia, none for the army of reserve, and all the disbanded men and Scotch fencibles were open,

and there was no competition, yet no more had been obtained for general service last year than 7,294 men. From May to December this year, there were 6,791, of course the difference was only 503, which was one-fourteenth of the whole.

Dr. Laurence was not satisfied with this comparison, because it did not take exclusively the months of August, Sept., Oct., and Nov., in each of the years compared; because those were the months in which the Army of Reserve Bill was ballotted for, and when of course the high bounties for substitutes to serve in it operated.

The *Attorney General* said, he should not make many observations on the speech of the right hon. gent. (Mr. Windham), although he should certainly make some. He did not mean to cast any censure on that right hon. gent., or say things as if any speech could be intended by him to give any advantage to the enemy over us.—He was persuaded that the right hon. gent. was one of the last in the House, who would use any curious expressions in argument for the sake of an advantage, or for an apparent advantage in debate. He was persuaded, that the right hon. gent. did not wish to give our enemies any such, or any other advantage whatever; but he had frequently had occasion to feel, that the views which the right hon. gent. had of things that came under his consideration, and the consequent manner in which he expressed himself, had, although not so intended by him a tendency to the great disadvantage of the country; for what he thought most useful, what he so thought, or he would not say it, the *Attorney General* thought in many instances, most disadvantageous to the country. If the question now before the House, was a new question, whether we should or should not, adopt a mode of defence by volunteer corps, there were hardly any limits of criticism to which we should wish to stop the right hon. gent. from entering; but when the volunteer system had been adopted to such an extent as it had been, so that it must be in vain for any man to hope, that any observations could induce the House to abandon the system, then it did seem to him to be not a very useful practice to dwell upon the defects of such a system, but on the contrary, it appeared to him that some mischief might result from such a practice. If the volunteers were not such a force as the House could desire, which he did not say was their description, but if, for the sake of argument, they were so allowed to be, could this sort of language respecting them be useful? On the contrary, he would ask, if it was not most

prejudicial? The condition of the volunteers should be attended to, many suggestions had been made concerning them, and they were most valuable suggestions, highly deserving of great consideration, as every thing must be that tended to ameliorate the condition of three or four hundred thousand men, armed and associated in defence of their country. But the effect of the argument of the right hon. gent. was to degrade the volunteers in their own eyes.—He did not say it was the intention of the right hon. gent. so to do, but it was the tendency, and if assented to, would be the effect of his observations.—No man could hear or read the words of the right hon. gent. but must, if he gave credit to the observations, look upon the volunteer corps as a body of a very low estimation. But was that all? Let any one who heard the hon. gent. to-night, or indeed at any time this session, ask himself, whether, if the volunteers had that respect for the opinion of the right hon. gent., which his opinions in some other matters were entitled to, they would have confidence in themselves?—Could they have any such confidence, if the language of Parliament, of those who had encouraged them to come out for the service of their country, was to be on the model of the right hon. gent., and Parliament were to say to them—"At best you will be little better than a rabble—you may depend upon it, no useful service can be expected of you."—Now, as to the corruption of which the right hon. gent. spoke, as being found in the volunteer corps, the right hon. gent., in his predilection to finding fault with all volunteer corps, might have been able to find out some of them who had behaved improperly. But was it fair to argue against the whole of such an immense body as this, on account of the conduct of a few who might have disgraced themselves? The persons to whom the right hon. gent. alluded, had been a disgrace—to whom?—to themselves; but not to the whole corps of volunteers, who were as unconnected with those persons as possible, and stood as distinct from them, as they did from their faults. If the right hon. gent. took the character of the volunteer corps from the character of those who disgraced them, there was an end of every thing like reasoning upon human affairs: as well might the right hon. gent. go to the gaol of Newgate, and insist upon taking out of the cells there, characters from which to form a general opinion of human nature. This was only an error of the right hon. gent. in his predilection to finding fault with the volunteer system—not that he himself would make a bad conductor of a volunteer system; on the contrary, he

was persuaded, that if the right hon. gent. were to set his mind to it, no man would be more active, or heartily employed in forming a good volunteer corps than he would. But if he went and told them, "You have made me a captain, and you are going to make me a colonel; but if you ask me my opinion, I am of no use to you, nor have I any opinion of you. I know, indeed, that I am an Englishman, and that I will run against a bayonet certainly. You must run too against a bayonet, but that is all we can do; we have no skill to meet the enemy, we can only be destroyed." Why, if that was to be the language of the right hon. gent., it would not be wonderful if the corps were to say, "We do not like this gentleman:" for if a man became an officer of such a corps he ought not to endeavour to make them think meanly of themselves, but to inspire them with spirit and with confidence, and that he could only do, by showing them that they were equal to what they had undertaken, and, therefore, this doctrine of the right hon. gent. was as injurious to the corps to which he was attached as it was to the general system of the volunteer service. For the right hon. gent. said, that they were not only unfit now for what they are intended for, but that they are totally incapable of becoming of any utility whatever: this, he said, arose from the democratic nature of their constitution; and, in support of this, he read the articles of one of these bodies. The learned gent. said, he really did not know exactly to what corps the right hon. gent. alluded, but he said, he himself had been an unworthy member of a volunteer corps, to whom he did believe the right hon. gent. intended his observation to apply, but to which it did not apply with justice, namely, that not only the officers were chosen by the corps, but also, that the whole of the military concerns of the corps, were under the control and management of a committee. If there was any strong objection to the formation or to the regulation of that corps, and if the constitution of it was upon a false or an improper foundation, that was not the fault of the present ministers, because that corps was approved of under the administration of the right hon. gent. himself; but this was an observation, that occurred so frequently on the objection which that right hon. gent. had been in the habit of making since he was out of administration, that he should not insist much upon it. But he must take the liberty of refuting the assertion of the right hon. gent., that these committees controlled the military concerns of the corps. The fact was,

that these committees had nothing upon earth to do with the military affairs of the corps. They were a body who conduct their own expenses, and all they had to do was of a civil nature entirely. They did not, in the least degree, interfere with the military authority of the officers, nor with any one thing that was of a military nature. With respect to the idea of the right hon. gent., in having what he called an armed peasantry, he would save the regular army nothing by that with regard to officers of experience, for the armed peasantry would as much require officers of experience, as the volunteer corps. And as to the objection of the right hon. gent. to the volunteers, on account of their corrupting the regulars, because the volunteers would not be under martial law, that was an error in the right hon. gentleman's assertion, for the moment they joined the regular army they would be under martial law. The objection that the volunteer system tended to confusion of rank, was ill-founded; for, generally speaking, men of rank and character were the objects of choice with the corps. The impediments this system threw in the way of recruiting, his noble friend had answered by a statement of facts. If there was any doubt whether a volunteer would enter into the regular service, the practice was in the affirmative; but if any doubt existed upon that matter, it was proper to remove such doubt by the bill which was now in the House, and stood for a second reading to-night upon the subject of Exemptions of Volunteers. But what he wished to submit to the House most of all was this—Did any gentleman really think that these armed peasantry ought to be resorted to instead of the volunteers? Did the right hon. gent. himself mean to say, that if he could persuade the House of Commons and the other House of Parliament, and his Majesty to consent, that we should now abandon the volunteer corps, that he himself would propose the peasantry instead of that system, or had he any other system in his mind instead of it? If we had no volunteer corps there must be a compulsory levy, and that would be very difficult in comparison to this system. If a ballot were to take place, it should be remembered, that great numbers of the volunteer corps would find deputies, and that would impede the army as much as the present system can do. Now, if the right hon. gent. had no plan instead of this system of the volunteer corps, he would, upon reflection, perhaps, doubt the wisdom of the opposition he gave it.

Mr. Windham denied that he had meant an armed democracy, to the extent alleged,

He only spoke of the mixture which might take place during the time when the volunteers were not under martial law. If he disapproved of the present plan, if it was not necessary, as some had insisted, to propose another as a substitute or amelioration. He did not conceive it always requisite for those who opposed plans, to have others ready for adoption; but were that principle at this time strictly urged against him, those who did so, might, by references to the suggestions of his former speeches in that House, discover a substitute for the present plan. He thus spoke his sentiments, as he did not conceive the present measure as yet fixed and immutable.

The *Secretary at War* said, that in answer to a fact, which had been stated by a learned gentleman, that the operation of the army of reserve, had injured recruiting for the regular service during the months it operated, he had to state, that upon a comparative view of the months from July to November, the recruiting for the regular army had been greater than in the year 1802, notwithstanding all the advantages of that year by the recruiting service having the monopoly of it then, and also that the two militia and Scotch fencibles had been discharged, and in the present year the army of reserve had so operated.

The question was then put and carried, and all the resolutions of the Committee were read and agreed to.

[**VOLUNTEER EXEMPTION BILL.**]—On the motion for the second reading of the Volunteer Exemption Bill,

Dr. *Laurence* said that some misapprehension existed about the exemptions with respect to the volunteers who had not been accepted before the 23d of July. They were told originally they could not have the exemptions, and they gave their services without expecting them. But now, as the exemptions were given to others in their situation, it was fair they should have the option.

Mr. *Secretary Yorke* said, that all volunteer corps, whose services had been accepted, at whatsoever time, and who conformed to provisions prescribed, were entitled to the exemptions, except those who expressly declared them in their offers.

In answer to an observation from Mr. *Rose*, as to the number of days of exercise, Mr. *Sec. Yorke* said, he proposed to fill the blank with 24 days.

The bill was read a second time, and committed for Monday.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, December 13.

[**MINUTES.**]—The East India Bond Bill, the Seamen's Desertion Bill, and others, were read a third time and passed.—The Expiring Laws Bill, the Sugar Drawback Bill, &c., &c., were committed and reported.

[**BANK RESTRICTION BILL.**]—Upon the motion for the third reading of the Bank Restriction Bill,

Lord *Grenville* said, he had already expressed his surprise at this Bill having been read a second time without notice, the day after it came up to that House. He thought that on the whole, it was best at the present moment to continue the Bank Restriction; but this was not a step to be taken with indifference or to be forwarded as a matter of course through its various stages: it was, on the contrary a great evil; necessary, perhaps, in such a crisis as the present, but well worthy of the most serious attention of Parliament. It had been first proposed as a measure merely temporary, to meet a momentary but very alarming danger; as such it had, he thought, been highly beneficial. But it had been attended with the mischief inseparable from all measures of the same description. The fundamental principle of all governments on this subject ought to be, that credit and circulation, if undisturbed by legislative interference, will invariably find their own level. Whenever any temporary purpose (as must sometimes happen) induces a departure from this principle, the misfortune is, that the first deviation too commonly leads to the necessity of a second, and so necessarily, until it becomes almost impossible to tread back the same steps, or to revert to the only wise system of policy on the subject. So it happened in this case. The measure adopted in the first instance to meet a momentary purpose, had afterwards been prolonged (perhaps unavoidably) till the conclusion of that war; and even now, though he lamented the effects of that prolongation, he hardly ventured to decide that the opinion of Parliament had, in that instance, been wrong. Next came the peace, so very like war, that its authors themselves had been afraid to depart from the war system; nor had he himself then opposed its renewal, convinced, as he was, that the pretended state of peace was a real state of war in every thing, except in the power of providing for self-defence, and for the protection of our own interest. To venture such a step in the present moment, at least with-

out much preparation, would doubtless be difficult and hazardous. But he was not equally convinced, that it was wise to declare beforehand that the restriction should continue during the whole of this war, entertaining, as he confessed he did, some doubt whether it ought to have been continued to the end of the last war, and still, more, whether it should be prolonged at the peace. He was afraid that there was now growing up in this country a most mistaken apathy on the subject. Many persons believed that the continuance of the restriction had hitherto produced no inconvenience, and that there was therefore no danger in prolonging it almost indefinitely. Both parts of this opinion were, he thought, extremely erroneous. Much evil, he was persuaded, had already been produced by the measure, however necessary at the time of its adoption; and every day's continuance augmented, in a rapid proportion, both the extent of the evil and the difficulty of its removal.—That, during the continuance of this measure, our paper circulation, both Bank and private paper, had infinitely increased, no man was ignorant of. He was afraid it might be shewn, that this was a necessary consequence of the measure itself. The power of converting paper into cash at the will of the holder, was the only safe limitation that ever could exist upon the issue of paper, and, if left to its free operation, it was a limitation that might safely be relied on. All other limitations were arbitrary, depending on the uncertain speculations of individuals upon points which no speculations ever can decide with accuracy. It was said that, if the Bank had not increased its circulating paper since the restriction, no mischief could have arisen from it. No position can be more fallacious. In the first place, the Bank paper has in fact increased; but even if this had not happened, the argument would still be of no weight. If private paper has during that period been greatly augmented, it is plain that the whole proportion of paper to cash in circulation has been changed, and that this change has equally taken place, whether the increase has arisen in Bank paper or in private paper. The restraint upon the Bank must necessarily give some increased encouragement to the issue of private paper, because, for private paper, cash may legally be demanded, for Bank paper it cannot; and if, by these or any other means, the proportion of private paper be much increased, there must obviously be less room for the circulation, even for the same quantity as before of Bank paper; and

there is therefore much more reason to apprehend that the issue is too large, when it appears that instead of remaining at the same amount, the quantity of Bank paper has also been very much increased. The actual increase of private paper, a fact which no one could dispute, was the particular circumstance to which Lord G. said, he principally wished to call the attention of the House.—“Paper (he said) now forms in this country the principal medium of circulation between man and man, not as formerly in commercial transactions only, but now in all the ordinary dealings of life. In times of perfect security and public confidence, even this might happen to a considerable extent without much inconvenience; and so long as the natural operations of demand and supply were allowed to control it, though some excess might occasionally take place, yet experience shewed, that any such evil would speedily correct itself. The tide might ebb and flow, but no permanent interruption would arise from it to the stream of national prosperity. The case is widely different now. We are called upon to provide against the danger of a sudden alarm, such as must arise if a country so long unused to the tread of a hostile foot should even for the shortest interval become the theatre of war. But we are discharging this duty in a most inadequate and insufficient manner. We are providing for the smaller evil, but seem wholly indifferent to the greater. We are guarding against the consequences of any sudden run upon the Bank in a moment of alarm; but we take no consideration of the effect of a similar alarm on that mass of private paper, which constitutes so much larger a proportion of the circulating medium of the country. The stability of the Bank has been guaranteed to its creditors by repeated parliamentary examinations; and when we restrain it by law from fulfilling its engagements with them, we have given a fresh pledge of public faith that they shall suffer no loss by that provision. But what will be the case of private paper? Let the House represent to itself the situation of a Bank, established perhaps in the very town to be first attacked, and the state of the surrounding district, whose circulation consists perhaps almost exclusively of that paper. What means will such a Bank possess to satisfy even the ordinary demands upon it? How much would those demands in such a case be increased? And what would be the state of such a district, if to all the other evils of war were added the sudden annihilation of its whole circu-

lating medium? Already are we told from authority, that there appears in the country an eagerness to collect, or, as it is insidiously called, to hoard cash. In times of scarcity, the ignorant are taught to clamour against the farmer and the corn-factor, who by collecting and preserving grain, afford to a country its only security against famine. By the salutary provision of nature, the measures which individuals take in such cases for their own security and benefit, constitute in the aggregate the security and advantage of the community itself. In the same manner, (it might appear paradoxical, but if a paradox, it was one which he held in common with all enlightened writers on this subject) the best security against a total want of circulating medium in the time of our utmost need, would be found in the necessity, which persons in the middling classes of life already feel, of providing beforehand for such an occasion. How, indeed, could it be expected, that when a man of that description joins the volunteer ranks, and serves his country in the field, he should leave his family to rely entirely, and for their daily bread, on the paper of a private banker, whose counting-house may be at that very moment occupied by the enemy.—The steps taken by such individuals to make provision for this case, must then of necessity produce at this time an increased demand for specie; that demand will in this as in every other article, produce an increased value; and, unless the nature of things be inverted, the increased value must, in its turn, produce an increased supply. He was therefore, beyond measure astonished to hear that, in some other place, this conduct in persons of such a description had been spoken of as a fit subject of reproach and censure, and that this opinion had proceeded from a quarter which ought to be of the highest authority in matters of this nature. Such language could have no other tendency in this case (as in that to which he had already likened it) than to raise popular odium, and to excite popular tumult, against men who used their own discretion in disposing of their own property. If it were fit to censure such a disposition, it must be essential to endeavour to prevent it. There were two precedents in history which might be resorted to for this purpose; two cases where, in support of an excessive issue of paper, government had regulated by law the quantity of specie which each individual should be suffered to retain. Those were the Mississippi scheme, and the scheme of the assignats. In both

instances the measure had immediately annihilated the paper it was intended to support. He had no fear that the same principle, by whatever authority it had been countenanced, would be acted upon to the same extent in this country; but he must take the liberty to say, that, in so far as it was followed up, either in speech or action exactly in that proportion the public credit was affected and injured by it. The danger of such a shock to private paper, as he had stated, in the case of invasion, was not to be guarded against by such language, which had no other tendency than to increase that danger. Neither was it one which, on the other hand, it was prudent or safe for us to overlook. The wretched policy of neglecting necessary precautions for fear of creating just alarm began now to be sufficiently understood. In every instance in which it was resorted to, it always would produce the same effects as had already been so fatally experienced from it. Yet, by the present bill, while we confess the nature of the danger, the slightest glance at the proportion which private paper bears to that of the bank will shew how far we are from providing for its extent. Those who at all understand the subject, know that the Bank paper possesses a stability not to be shaken but by such a total subversion of the country as no Englishman wishes to survive. Yet we think ourselves obliged to protect even this corporation, resting on such immutable pillars of security, against the danger of sudden pressure from temporary alarm. Shall we then wholly overlook the private paper, so much greater in extent, and so much less secure in its stability? The ultimate security of the paper issued by the country banks now established in every corner of this island might be as perfect as that of the Bank itself. The facility which they give in ordinary times to the commercial transactions of the country is unquestionable. But no man can look without the most serious apprehension at the temporary effect which the first moment of actual invasion might produce on those local establishments; at the extent to which such an evil might spread; or at the consequences which it might produce, in a country whose circulation is almost entirely composed of paper. To represent this danger to Parliament, even if no remedy for it occurred to the persons stating it, would not only be a blameless, but a laudable and proper discharge of public duty. When the subject was brought under the consideration of Parliament and the public, if

its importance engaged their attention, the wisdom and experience of men much more conversant than he pretended to be, would doubtless suggest every remedy or precaution which the nature of the case admitted; suggestions which might well escape the researches of individuals far superior to him in knowledge or ability. But if the subject should continue to be wholly disregarded, overlooked by negligence, or put out of sight by hopeless despondency, the evil would come upon us at the last; it would overtake us in the midst of difficulty and distress, when precaution would be too late, and remedy impossible! He therefore earnestly recommended, after the recess, if it could not be done before, that Committees might be named by Parliament, to take this subject into the most serious and attentive consideration. To such Committees it would naturally belong to suggest those remedies, which, on full discussion and consultation with men experienced in such matters, might appear most practicable and useful. Any suggestions of his would in the present moment be premature, and certainly must be in a great measure crude and undigested. But he by no means despaired of seeing the most beneficial consequences result from such an investigation. Two objects it would naturally have in view. The first to re-introduce into the circulation of the country such a quantity of coin as might at least suffice for the ordinary dealings of life; that coin which was now vanished by the excessive issues of paper of all descriptions, no longer checked by the natural limitation, that of being immediately convertible into cash. The next object naturally would be, to provide, as far as possible, for the stability and credit, *even during the existence of actual invasion*, of such paper as would still continue to circulate. These objects would both of them, as he apprehended, best be obtained, by recurring, not suddenly nor abruptly, but by well considered gradations, and with every possible attendant precaution that the wisdom of man could devise, to that first principle by which alone paper issues can be limited, and on which it alone can securely rest, namely, the power of their immediate conversion into cash. He spoke on this subject with all the distrust of his own opinion, which he ought to feel; but at least he spoke not without much consideration of the question; and the conviction of his own mind was, that this was the end to be kept invariably in view, to be accelerated as could be found consistent with prudence and due regard to public safety, and to be considered as the only fundamental cause of

the evils now felt or apprehended. With respect to the paper, if resting on a solid foundation of ultimate solvency, it might be provided for by some mutual guarantee, so far removed from the scene of immediate alarm, as to place the security of the holder far beyond the reach of any danger merely local. He remembered to have heard it said many years ago by Mr. Burke, a man whose words and thoughts were well calculated to leave a lasting impression on their hearers, "That the effect of the system of credit in this country was such as to make the whole commercial and monied interest of Great Britain joint proprietors and co-partners in the whole mass of capital existing in the country." In some sense this was undoubtedly loose; and as these extensive interests had the benefit of such a partnership, so it must be added that they were not wholly exempt from its risks. They had *all* an immediate interest in upholding the credit of *all*; and he did not despair, that, by examination and discussion, a system might be framed, in which the paper of individuals or private houses might, if resting on a sure and due foundation, be supported to a limited extent, by some extensive and reciprocal guarantee against the effects of sudden alarm; and to such a voluntary association, formed under the direction of Parliament, and countenanced by its authority, there might or might not be added, as should on the whole be judged expedient, some additional security from the intervention of the public. In his own mind, he had followed these ideas further, and pursued them into some detail; but he wished not to trouble the House at this time with any discussion of them. No man felt more strongly the difficulty and delicacy of the whole subject. No man more sincerely distrusted his own judgment upon it; but, impressed as he was with its importance, satisfied that if we were unprepared in this respect, all naval and all military preparation, however extensive, would be inadequate to the safety of the country; he had done his duty in calling the attention of Parliament to the question. He had no doubt that the danger of leaving it unexamined was infinitely greater than any danger that could, by any possibility, arise from the examination of it; and it would therefore be offering an insult to the understandings of the House, if he delayed them by any farther explanation of the motives with which he brought it forward. He could have no interest in increasing the public danger. If this evil could not be avoided, we must prepare ourselves to meet it with resolution. But such a shock as the

sudden depreciation of the whole circulatory medium of a country, and this too in a moment of invasion, must, in its consequences, overwhelm all men, of whatever descriptions or situations in the country. He was confident that diligence, wisdom, and firmness, would avert this, and every other danger of the country; but this could only be done by ascertaining the nature and extent of the evils with which we were menaced. This bill was itself a proof that the subject of public credit was not thought unfit for public discussion, or incapable of parliamentary provision; and the matters he had now brought before the House were nothing else than different branches of the same extensive subject.

Lord *Hawkesbury* then rose, and spoke nearly as follows:—I rise, my lords, to offer some remarks in reply to what has fallen from the noble lord who has just sat down. In some of the general principles which he has stated, I most certainly cannot but agree with him, though I cannot concur in his application of them, in the present instance. And, indeed, in listening to some parts of his lordship's speech, it was difficult for me to recognise the words of one who had so great a share in proposing this measure originally. That the proportion of paper in circulation to the amount of the specie ought to be left to find its own natural level, and that, except in some particular situations, it will, when left to itself, find its natural level, is a principal in political economy, that no one can be hardy enough in the present day to controvert. I agree, therefore, that legislative interference, or any sort of interference, ought, if possible, to be avoided; but at the same time circumstances may occur, and his lordship has admitted that this may be the case, when the good to be derived from such a measure far overbalances the evils that may be consequent upon it. When this bill was originally brought into Parliament, there were a few who were not at all convinced of the necessity of it; these, however, were but very few. Others were aware of its magnitude and importance, yet still thought, that under the then circumstances of menaced invasion, very like our present situation, a run upon the bank, in consequence of the alarm, might be attended with the most pernicious consequences, and therefore joined in giving their vote for the proposed restriction. I also had turned my attention to the subject, and I will fairly own that the difficulties with which it was surrounded pressed heavily on my mind, and one of the chief of these was, that a precedent might thus be established, which could in its consequences be attended with no be-

neficial effects, I, however, upon mature deliberation, was convinced that under all the circumstances of the case, the restriction was necessary. It was afterwards thought expedient to continue the operation of the act during the whole course of the last war. At the close of the war the government of the country thought it necessary, upon several grounds, that the restriction should be continued for one year, subsequent to the conclusion of the treaty of peace. But although I so far agree with the noble lord in the general principle, that it is proper to avoid all interference in those things, which, by their own natural operations, will find their just level, I am by no means prepared to admit that these consequences have resulted from the restriction upon the bank, which he has ascribed to it, or that such consequences are to be dreaded. It will, perhaps, be in the recollection of all, that previous to the last war, and four years before the original passing of this bill, the quantity of paper had increased to an enormous degree. This naturally arose from the extensive speculation and commercial enterprise of the country. These, along with the improvements in agriculture, the spirit of adventure, the riches and growing population of the nation brought a quantity of paper into circulation above its just proportion to the amount of cash. The very means by which our power and wealth were improved, therefore gave rise to a sort of artificial capital, which was certainly an evil, but an evil that must of necessity be endured, as it arose from such a cause. These, it evidently appeared, were the causes of the great proportion of paper in circulation, and to these causes the evil, if it were an evil, for there are considerable differences of opinion on that point, is to be traced rather than to the operation of the bill in question. His lordship has adverted to what was said in another place, (the House of Commons) with respect to laying up cash at this time, or, as it has been generally called, hoarding, by a certain hon. gent. high in administration (Mr. Addington). I sincerely agree with the noble lord, and it has been, as he has stated it, the opinion of the most eminent and luminous writers on political economy, that laying up any commodity in times of a scarcity of that commodity, is a corrective of the scarcity. No one now that pretends to be at all conversant with the subject, but knows the ignorance of those popular clamours which in times of general scarcity are raised against the cornfactor and the farmer, who are, in fact, the only instruments by which countries visited with scarcity are preserved from absolute famine. But the noble lord has certainly mistaken the

sense in which the words to which he alluded were applied. In another place, a censure, and a just censure, was meant to be cast upon those individuals, who were so defective in their patriotism as in the present moment to hoard up their money and keep it out of general circulation, from a want of confidence in the security of their country; and in this sense the words were certainly used. Though communities, such as the Bank, upon which the credit of the country depended, ought certainly to keep as much cash as is adequate to the demands of the nation, and hoarding therefore is proper in them, the case I apprehend is very different, as far as it respects individuals.—Now with respect to the proposals of the noble lord as to the appointment of a committee; the noble lord has not brought forward these in form, nor as objections to the present passing of the bill. I desire therefore to be understood, as not either according to, or absolutely denying the plan to which he has adverted. I agree with him, that some particularly important evils may, even in times of danger and alarm, be brought forward under peculiar circumstances, and proposed to the consideration of parliament though the person who does thus bring them forward, cannot, at the time, suggest to his own satisfaction any full and adequate remedy. The first remedy which he suggests to the evil which he thinks to arise from the Bank's restriction, is, that the Bank should gradually, and with much prudent forethought be made to resume its payments in specie. If, however, the evil does not arise from this cause, but from the other causes which I have already mentioned, viz. the increasing commerce and agriculture of the country, it follows that this remedy will not avail for correcting that evil. But the noble lord will also recollect, that though under all circumstances his Majesty's government had thought it advisable to propose the passing of this act during the whole course of the present war, the act may still be repealed by Parliament, if previous to that time, the necessity that at present exists should by any means be done away. I can assure the noble lord, that this subject has not been left unnoticed by his Majesty's government.—Now, to examine the other remedy, which he suggests for giving greater security to public credit. I suppose his lordship means that something of the same nature should be resorted to as that sort of plan which was adopted in 1793, of giving government paper and security to such individuals as could prove to the satisfaction of a Committee that they had real and solid property to the amount. I was not at the time

perfectly satisfied with this scheme; and from what has since fallen under my own observation, nothing short of a very strong necessity indeed could oblige me to give my assent to such a measure. I do not therefore say, that no circumstances could exist in which I should think the plan advisable to be adopted. But I know that a great many inconveniences, if not serious evils, arise from it. One of these was, that where great commercial bodies, or great manufactories were established, and any embarrassment occurred among them, the proprietors immediately applied to parliament for relief. The great inconvenience and mischief of this plan, therefore, was, that it gave a sort of security to people, which made them not trust to themselves, and encouraged them to rely upon the public security in the worst that could happen. I shall do the persons who were then, and those who are now engaged in the places that rendered it their immediate concern to attend to these things, the justice to say, that they gave every discouragement consistent with prudence and propriety to applications of this sort. But it is a fact, that much mischief would result from a scheme of this nature, in teaching people to rely upon public security instead of their own exertions. Bankruptcies might thus, in some instances, be prevented; but, in the natural course of things, great, extensive, and ill founded speculation would bring on bankruptcies, which, in fact, are the natural correctives that apply to such evils. In such cases, therefore, the public ought not to interfere. Upon the whole, without giving any decided opinion as to his lordship's remedies, I may say, that at present, I do not perceive that they apply to the evils proposed to be remedied, and that it appears to me, in fact, that the evil itself, if it be an evil, does not arise from the cause to which his lordship ascribes it.

Lord King said, that notwithstanding his objections to the present measure, and the general reasoning by which it was supported, he had been much gratified by several parts of the noble Secretary's speech. He had heard, with very great pleasure, the noble lord's distinct admission, that the principle of the bill was radically vicious, his declared repugnance to all legislative interference on subjects of this nature, and his avowal* that such measures could be justified only by the most urgent necessity. Such public admissions, from the persons who proposed these measures, were highly important at all times, but more particularly at present; when, from their frequent repeti-

tion for the last seven years, there was some cause of apprehension, lest the practice of assenting to such acts, upon the mere suggestion of the minister, might acquire the sanction of precedent, and become the regular and established usage of Parliament. His lordship said, that having so often troubled the House upon this subject, and so lately in the Committee on this bill, he would not now enter at large into the question; but confine himself principally to some of those incidental topics which had been introduced in the course of the discussion. The only argument of the least weight which he had heard, either in or out of Parliament, in support of the measure, was the probability of great public embarrassment, from the demand upon the Bank for specie in case of invasion. But it was acknowledged, that the present measure had already, in point of fact, produced some of those very inconveniences which were the objects of so much apprehension. Complaints had been made in another place, that a large proportion of the current coin had been withdrawn from circulation by selfish individuals, who preferred their private security to the public welfare; and the patriotism of the country had been loudly called upon, to put a stop to what had been termed the infamous practice of *hoarding*. He entirely agreed with the noble lord who had opened this debate, as to the folly and impropriety of this vulgar and ignorant clamour. The complaint reminded him of those periods of the French revolution, when it was not uncommon to hear of accusations of *incivism*, for the crime of preferring French crowns and *Louis d'ors*, to the republican assignats depreciated at that time 4 or 500 per cent. The real crime of the persons who were thus denounced, consisted in distrusting the good faith of the republic, under the guidance of those virtuous citizens and enlightened political economists, who composed the Committee of Public Safety. So, in the present instance, he could not but think that the persons who were thus held forth to popular odium, were, in other words, accused of being so utterly destitute of public spirit as to betray their apprehension for the fate of the country, in the hands of his Majesty's present ministers. Respecting the fact itself, he was inclined to think, that the practice of hoarding took place to some extent, as it was reasonable to suppose in critical and dangerous times: and it was probably still more general in Ireland, in proportion to the danger of the country. He thought that persons in public situations ought not to lend their voice

to assist the clamour which was raised against those who chose to keep a part of their property in the form of coin, or who, in the present circumstances of the country, preferred specie to any other commodity. He thought upon general principles, that the rights of property should be respected, and that the public interest regarded that those rights should be as free and uncontrolled as possible. He was persuaded that if specie was accumulated, in any considerable degree, in times of public alarm, the public difficulties and embarrassment would be diminished, in the same proportion, when the enemy landed and the moment of danger actually arrived. The noble lord who had opened this debate had well and forcibly illustrated this position, by comparing what was now so much complained of, to the practice of hoarding corn in times of scarcity, where, by a process exactly similar, the prudence of individuals, which in that case also is so much the object of popular odium, provides against and alleviates the calamity at the time of its greatest pressure.—With respect to the measure which was now under discussion, his lordship said, that the powers which were entrusted to the Bank, for an indefinite period, were in no respect guarded against abuse. The natural and only true limit of every paper currency, was the power of compelling payment in specie at the will of the holder. A paper currency not convertible into specie had no rule or standard, except the discretion of the persons by whom it was issued. To determine the quantity of currency necessary for circulation was, in all cases, a difficult and delicate problem. A very strict attention to the price of bullion, and the state of foreign exchanges, was alone capable of affording a just criterion by which the quantity could be truly ascertained. Without a perpetual reference to these tests, it was impossible to maintain the full value of the currency. That the Bank Directors had failed in the performance of this duty was evident, from the enormous increase in the quantity of their notes, and the great derangements which had taken place in the price of silver and foreign exchanges, since the period of the restriction. He said, that the excessive quantity of Bank notes, by raising the market price of silver above the Mint price, was one of the causes of the present scarcity of silver coin; because it furnished an additional temptation to that practice, which was thus rendered more profitable than at any former period. He stated it as a fact, for the truth of which he appealed to those lords who represented the

peerage of Ireland, that, in consequence of the still greater depreciation of the currency of that country, the silver coin there had totally disappeared, and had given place to a most debased and counterfeit substitute. He should not now enlarge upon this subject, though it was one of the very highest importance, since a more proper opportunity for the discussion would occur when the Irish Bank Restriction Bill was brought into the House.—He said, that the proposal of the noble lord, who had opened the debate, for a Committee to take into consideration the important questions to which he had alluded, should meet with his most cordial support. The noble Secretary had stated, that he was not prepared either to assent or dissent on the first mention of such a proposal; but as it had been required that some distinct subject of inquiry ought to be stated, to induce the House to consent to such a Committee, he would take the liberty (if it was not presuming too far) to mention some of the topics to which the attention of a Committee might be directed with great propriety and advantage. Independent of the general question, respecting the effect of the Bank restriction upon the currency of the two countries, there was great room for inquiring into the policy of adopting a new system of coinage, and of new modelling the regulations of the Mint. The propriety of deducting from the value of the coin, the expense of the coinage, was an alteration which had long been proposed by the best writers on the subject; and was one which he should think it right to submit to the attention of the Committee. It would be useful also, to consider the propriety of adjusting the relative values of the silver and gold coins, according to the change which had taken place in the relative values of those metals; an alteration of indispensable necessity, since, by the present regulations of the Mint, it had long been found impossible to retain any new issue of silver coin in circulation. There was, also, another object of importance which might be referred to such a Committee; he meant the propriety of repealing all laws against exporting the current coin of the country, and of allowing it to be considered as a common article of merchandize. The laws, which prohibited this, were founded in popular error, and formed part of a system which was now universally exploded. At present, when the exchange is unfavourable, the coin, which is necessary for paying the balance against us, must be melted down in order to be exported without risk of seizure. By the proposed alteration, it would

be exported in the shape of coin, when the exchange was unfavourable, and would return in the same state, when the exchange was restored to its usual and ordinary course. He concluded by again expressing his hopes, that the proposal which had been made, for a Committee to consider the various questions connected with the credit and currency of the country, would be seriously brought forward after the recess, and would be adopted by the House.

The *Marquis of Sligo* rose, as he said, to confirm Lord King's account of the badness of the silver coinage in Ireland. He however denied that any transaction of the nature alluded to by his lordship, had ever fallen under his observation, or was consistent with his knowledge.

The *Duke of Norfolk* did not mean at present to oppose the bill, but he remarked that it was too much the custom of the last administration to propose and carry dangerous measures, and afterwards act upon them as precedents. This now had become a precedent, and he was sorry that, as it had been once enacted, this was not a time to repeal it. Government ought to be aware how it passed measures of this magnitude at the desire of persons, by whose means they might become independent of Parliament. If ministers would, whenever the Bank directors pleased, come to Parliament and obtain a law to protect those directors against the legal demands of their creditors, it might be feared, that in return those directors might, at some time or other, give ministers such aid as would enable them to dispense, for a time at least, with the concurrence of Parliament.

Lord Grenville rose to explain some misstatements of his positions by the noble Secretary of State. Particularly, he observed, he had been completely misunderstood in the plan which he suggested for giving greater security to private paper. He did not at all mean that government security was to be given to individuals as in 1793. His plan was this, that as the individuals of the nation were concerned in the capital of the whole nation, a general plan should be entered upon, under the countenance of Parliament, to support the credit of any particular private bank, whose paper should be affected by a landing of the enemy or any other alarm in the place where it was situated.

Lord Hawkesbury denied, in the most positive terms, that the bill was introduced at the request, or even at the suggestion of the Bank directors; but that government had brought forward the measure solely from

their own conviction of its necessity.—The bill was then read a third time, and afterwards passed.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, December 13.

[MINUTES.]—Sir Francis Burdett moved the second reading of the Pancras Vestry and Overseers' Bill; which was read a second time, and referred to a Select Committee.—Mr. Byng brought up a petition from certain inhabitants of the parish of Pancras against the bill; which was referred to the Committee on the bill, and the petitioners ordered to be heard by themselves, their council or agents, against the bill, &c.—Lord Henry Petty moved that the report of the Committee on the petition of the Sierra Leone company of the year 1801, be referred to the Committee appointed to consider their petition presented in the present session. Ordered.—Mr. Hobhouse brought up the Mutiny Bill: which was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.—Mr. Johnson presented at the bar, from the office of the chief Secretary for Ireland, an account of the amount of Bank of Ireland notes in circulation at the different periods mentioned in the order of the House. Ordered to lie on the table, and to be printed.—Mr. Hobhouse brought up the report of the Committee of supply of yesterday. The resolutions were severally agreed to.—A message from the Lords informed the House, that their lordships had agreed to the following bills without any amendment, viz., the Malt Tax, the 5,000,000 Exchequer Bills, the Pension Duty, the Qualification Indemnity, the Irish Promissory Note, the East-India Bonds, the Irish Sugar Drawback, and the Seamen's Desertion Bills.—Admiral Berkeley brought up a petition from the debtors confined in Gloucester Castle. Ordered to lie on the table; as was also a petition from the debtors in the King's Bench.—Sir William Elford gave notice, that, after the recess, he should bring forward a motion to institute an inquiry into the cause of the dismissal of a very respectable individual from office, by the commissioners of naval inquiry.—Mr. Secretary Yorke brought up an account of the numbers of the volunteer corps, on the establishment, in Ireland, and of the number of corps that had been accepted by his Majesty. Ordered to lie on the table, and to be printed.

[VOLUNTEERS' EXEMPTION BILL.]—The House having resolved itself into a com-

mittee on the Volunteers' Amendment Bill:—Mr. Secretary Yorke observed, that it would not be necessary for him to take up the time of the Committee by going at large into the exposition of the bill before it, which he had fully explained on Saturday. The object he had now in view was merely to explain the points which it had been found necessary to introduce into it, in order to remove some doubts which existed respecting the former acts. Doubts had been entertained respecting the exemptions which volunteers claimed, and in many instances the commandants of corps had omitted, from their not being acquainted with the provisions of former acts, to make the returns before the day specified in those acts, namely, the 21st of September, on or before which the return should have been made to entitle the individual to exemption. There could be no question as to the Reserve, because three periods of the year were specified for making the returns, and if they should not be made before the 21st of September, they might in January. This first clause, therefore, was intended to enable commandants of corps to make returns at any time after the passing of the act, to make returns and to legalize such has had been made since the 21st of September, each of which was to exempt the individual from the ballot for the militia, as well as for the reserve. This clause was also to enable commandants of corps to make special returns, where the individuals had conformed to the provisions of the act. It had, in many instances, been found utterly impossible, to issue the quantity of arms necessary for the use of the volunteers, and as the terms of the act required that the returns should be made of men fully armed, equipped, and accounted, the commandants had a difficulty of making the returns where the arms had not been issued. But if the individuals had attended with pikes for the purpose, they would, in his opinion, be entitled to be returned as properly armed. In every instance also, where the quantity of arms proposed under the act, to be issued by government, which was one quarter of the number in the inland counties, and one half in the maritime, had been delivered, be considered the members of the corps as entitled to the return, if they attended the regular number of days at exercise. The second clause, therefore, would authorise the colonels of corps to make such special returns, where the members had attended the full number of days at drill, muster, and exercise, for the purpose of being

trained, even though the arms should not have been issued. The second part of the bill related to the establishment of uniformity in regulations respecting the exemptions. By the first Volunteer Act only one period was fixed for making the return, namely, the 25th of March, and five days attendance previous to that was required to entitle to the exemption from the militia ballot. By the second, three periods were fixed for making returns, the 1st of January, the 1st of May, and the 1st of September, and in each four months previous to each date, four days attendance was necessary for the cavalry, and eight for the infantry, to give a claim to the exemption. From the present situation of the country, it would be perceived that the nature of the voluntary services under the former act would not be effectual, and, therefore, he proposed that the same number of days should be necessary to entitle to an exemption, as well from the militia as from the army of reserve, and that it should not be less than twenty-five. He had stated the object of the bill, and as most of the amendments were verbal, it would not be necessary for him to trouble the Committee on each; he should, therefore, content himself with calling their attention to such as should be material.

Mr. Pitt said, as far as he could collect the provisions of the bill, it was calculated to attain the desired object. Upon one part of what was stated by the right hon. gent. he could not help animadverting. The right hon. gent. seemed to suppose, that though a corps might be armed with pikes, the commander might have returned them properly armed and equipped; he (Mr. Pitt) thought on the contrary, that if a corps had been raised, and accepted as a corps of regular infantry, that the only proper arms for such a corps were muskets, and that if they were armed with pikes or pitchforks, or any other weapon, that the commander could not return them as properly armed and equipped. With respect to another point, he could not conceive how it was possible, that a commander could return his corps as effective where there might be only arms delivered in the proportion of 25 to 100 men, and he had received a letter upon this subject from the Secretary of State, expressly stating, that no corps could be returned as effective, unless the men had had the opportunity of learning the use of arms, which prevented many commanders from returning their corps as effective, where they had

not been supplied with a sufficient quantity of arms. If 24 days attendance under arms was to be considered as sufficient, it must follow, that in those corps where only a fourth part of the requisite number of arms had been delivered, that there must be four times the number of days of attendance in order to give every one the opportunity of learning the use of them.

Mr. Rose said, he held in his hand a certificate which he had given of the corps which he commanded, stating that they were perfect in all the manœuvres of light infantry, and that they had attended muster and exercise three times the number of days required, with what arms they could procure, none having been furnished them by government. This certificate was returned by the lord lieutenant as insufficient to entitle them to exemption under the act, who referred to a letter from the Sec. of State as his authority. The gentlemen of the county however, construed the act more liberally, and took care, that the corps should be exempted. As to the description of arms which had been alluded to, it would never be said that riflemen were to be armed with pikes.

Mr. Secretary Yorke observed, that if government thought it necessary to alter the mode of arming the volunteer corps, and to furnish, for instance, the front rank with muskets, and the rear rank with pikes, he could not perceive that there could be any hesitation in the commanders of these corps in returning them properly armed and equipped. As to the case of a fourth part only of the requisite number of arms being furnished to any corps, he conceived, that if such corps had the opportunity, in the course of twenty-four days, of learning the use of arms, that they might have been returned as effective. As to the certificate mentioned by the right hon. gent. (Mr. Rose), it was insufficient, because it was not in conformity with the act of Parliament.

Mr. Pitt said, he did not wish to prolong the discussion, as the bill went to do away the doubts which had arisen. With respect however, to what had been said, that any arms might be given to a corps, his objection was, that if a corps of infantry was accepted as such, without any explanation as to the mode of arming, that it must be considered that such a corps was to be armed in the regular way with muskets, and that it could not be otherwise denominated "properly armed and equipped."

Sir William Young thought that some distinction ought to be made with respect to

exemptions, between those volunteers who so honorably came forward in the first instance impelled merely by their zeal and their patriotism, and those who enrolled themselves after the passing of the act for making a general array. By that act, if three-fourths of the first class in any district came forward, the district was exonerated from the compulsory clauses; these persons therefore only commuted one service for another, and, therefore, in his opinion, were less entitled to exemptions from the militia and the army of reserve. This description of volunteers included a great part of the peasantry of the country, who might be induced to enter into the army, whilst the former description of volunteers were wholly of a different class. This subject, he thought, deserved serious consideration, and he should press it upon the House after the recess.

The *Attorney General* observed, that if there were any case in which the lord lieutenant of any county adopted a mode by which some individuals would be released, and the burthen of a ballot would be flung upon others, it was one that was not authorized either by the legislature or the government of the country. Particular cases might admit of some partial modification; but these could only extend to things which were not in themselves of material import. What he understood by persons being duly armed was, that their service should have been tendered to and accepted of by government, and that arms should have been delivered to them in consequence. As to the strict meaning of a soldier being duly armed, that was a question more for a soldier than a lawyer to determine. According as he conceived the meaning of the law it was requisite, that to obtain exemption from the militia service, a man should have been disciplined in the use of arms on five distinct or separate days at least, and to gain an exclusion from the ballot under the army of reserve act, it was necessary that he should be at least twenty-four days in training to military exercise; that is that a man should be drilled for such a number of times on so many separate days without specifying any particular number of hours in each day, or supposing by any means that he was to be kept the entire of each day at exercise. Government it appeared to him, would have a right to exercise their own discretion as to the number or the particular species of arms which they should issue.

Mr. *Secretary Yorke* explained, that with respect to the issuing of pikes, it had been originally considered as a sort of temporary

armament until a sufficient number of muskets were in readiness to be issued; however, they had afterwards become more generally adopted.

Dr. *Laurence* stated, that he differed materially from the right hon. and learned gentleman who spoke last but one (the *Attorney General*), and that that right hon. gentleman also differed materially from himself on a former occasion, when stating his opinion on the subject which was now under discussion. Pikes were said to have been originally brought into use only as a temporary sort of armament, till others were procured; therefore any deviation from that must be irregular. As to the other case, namely, where 25 stand of arms only were issued for 100 men the commandant would then by law, that is if he acted according to the strict construction of the act, be under the necessity of giving a certificate of service to every individual, according as each completed the number of drill days which was required before he could obtain an exemption. From the hurry with which acts of parliament were frequently drawn up, inaccuracies must unavoidably occur sometimes in the manner in which they were framed; but it would be a dangerous principle to admit, that on account of the necessity which existed for their alteration, the laws could be dispensed with on any account whatever; and in each of the cases to which he had alluded the law should have been more strictly adhered to.

Lord *Granville Leveson Gower* stated, that in the county of Stafford, three weeks ago, not a single firelock had been received from government for the volunteer corps.

Mr. *Secretary Yorke* stated, that orders had been given to provide arms for the volunteer corps, but it was thought necessary to furnish them in the maritime counties first.

Mr. *Tierney* thought a distinction ought to be taken upon the subject of arms. When corps made their offers of service, they generally stated what they would provide themselves, and what they expected government to furnish. A corps that he was connected with, had stated, that they would provide themselves with clothing and other articles, and that they expected government to furnish arms and ammunition. By arms was certainly meant muskets, but if government thought proper to send arms of a different description, for instance, pikes, he should conceive that such a corps would be properly armed. As to the case of only a certain proportion of arms being furnished to a corps, he apprehended that supposing only 25 muskets to be furnished to 100 men, each man

might exercise with a musket, twenty-four different times in 24 days, so as to be returned as effective, and that for the purpose of the return it was of no consequence whether there were 25 muskets or 100. To illustrate this, he would suppose a case of five learned doctors having only one brief amongst them, yet if they all perused the brief, each would consider himself entitled to a fee.

Dr. *Laurence* contended, that there was no analogy in the case cited by the hon. gent. As to pikes, they could not, he said, be considered as proper arms in the cases mentioned.—Upon that part of the bill which related to the number of days of attendance—

Mr. *Rose* observed, that there were some volunteers who were paid for 85 days, and others only for 24; he thought it, therefore, not just that the former should only be required to attend 24 days for the purpose of being exempted. He wished also that something should be done to enforce discipline; he had heard of some irregularities committed, and he thought they ought to be checked.

Mr. *Secretary Yorke* said, that as the law now stood, volunteers were equally exempted in complying with the act by attending twenty-four days. As to enforcing discipline, his majesty had the power of making regulations for that purpose, and it was, perhaps, unnecessary to pass another act upon the subject, as it was highly desirable that too many regulations might not be made. There was a great improvement in the present system over that of last war, as the volunteers were now liable to be called out to meet the enemy, which they then were not.

Mr. *Rose* again contended, that these volunteers, who were paid for 85 days, ought not to be allowed an exemption for attending 24. He was well aware, he said, that his Majesty had the power of making regulations with respect to the discipline of the volunteer corps, but his Majesty had not the power of imposing fines for irregularity of conduct.

Mr. *Secretary Yorke* said, that volunteers would only be paid for the number of days they actually attended; and as to irregularity, any person misconducting himself might be expelled with disgrace from the corps to which he belonged, in which case he would be entitled to no exemption.

Mr. *Giles* said, that the bill now before the Committee went to alter the number of effective men. At present, every man who appeared, properly armed and accoutred, five days, was entitled to exemption from the militia; and if he appeared for 24 days, properly armed and accoutred, he was en-

titled to exemption from the army of reserve. The object of this bill was to make an alteration in that which made the volunteers effective men, and if this was done without the consent of the volunteer, it was a breach of good faith with such a man. If this bill passed in the form in which it stood now, the condition of the volunteer was to be altered by it; he had not what was promised to him when he entered, and therefore this measure was a breach of good faith towards him, and that by Parliament; good faith ought to be strictly observed by every body, but more especially by Parliament. It was extremely important to observe, that in this volunteer service there was at present no sort of discipline in this great body, except the terms on which they had been accepted. Many of them had discipline within themselves, and which they observed for their own regulation and internal arrangement; but if Parliament interfered to impose on them some discipline to which they did not agree at the time their services were accepted, it would do that which it had no right to do, because it was altering the condition on which the volunteers entered, and they were entitled to insist on the terms on which they entered; and here he could not help saying, that part of the speech of the right hon. gent. under the gallery (Mr. *Rose*) appeared to him to have a mischievous tendency, because it went to favour that breach of faith. It was impossible, without breaking the condition on which the volunteer entered, to alter any of it, or to subject him to any thing else without breach of faith. It was said to be desirable to put the volunteers with the regiments of the line. That was indeed the case of those who might be called out under the defence act, but it was expressly otherwise with regard to the volunteers; for Parliament had expressly declared that the volunteers should not be called upon to join the regiments of the line, and to do otherwise now would be to violate the faith which was the basis of the volunteer service; and if it was persisted in to make that alteration, the engagement between government and the volunteers was dissolved; and if measures of this kind were to be insisted upon, he was afraid the country would be deprived of a great deal of service it might otherwise have. The volunteers were an immense body of men, and they were, of course, very attentive to what passed concerning public affairs, and particularly respecting themselves; and care should be taken to bring nothing forward that was inconsistent with the faith which Parliament had pledged itself to keep towards them. He was, however,

confident, that ministers would not countenance, nor would Parliament pass, any measure that was contrary to good faith, in any shape or on any condition. There had been a great deal said some time ago on the subject of a breach of faith with respect to property, and he wished the House to be as attentive to the question of a breach of faith respecting liberty.

Mr. *Secretary Yorke* said, he could not see the clause now in discussion in the light in which the learned gent. viewed it; he did not see how it could be considered as a breach of faith. This was a remedial bill, to exempt volunteer corps from certain hardships to which they were at present exposed under the strict letter of the law. It was not intended by it to do any thing unfavourable to the volunteers. This clause was prospective; it was not intended to take place until after the 1st day of May next. But with regard to the exemption of volunteers, it was to take place immediately. The other part would in truth be as if Parliament never made any alteration in the law respecting these volunteers, and the learned gent. insisted on it, that Parliament had no right to make any alteration in the law in this respect; that he would never admit. The fact was, that it would be in the power of those volunteers to dissolve, who should not like this new regulation; they might quit the service if they did not approve of it, and did not choose to continue; the only consequence would then be, that they would have no exemption, but would be subject to be ballotted for the militia, or the army of reserve, and the deficiency which might thus be created in the corps must be filled up out of the classes specified in the defence act: but the alteration proposed, he apprehended, would not have the desired effect, for the number of days of attendance being limited to five, was applicable to a time of peace, whereas the measure must now be adapted to a time of war.

Sir *William Young* considered the volunteers as divided into two classes. Those which came under the regulations of the 42d of the King, and those under the act of the 43d of the King. The first he considered as volunteers superior, in consideration of their offers, to the second; for the first came forward without any view, expectation, hope, or idea of any exemption whatever. The second, although he did not mean to dispute their spirit, zeal, or patriotism, yet they came forward volunteers under the idea of a commutation of duty—to be exempt from other military duties that would have been imposed upon them by law, the Army of

Reserve, Militia and Defence Act; he therefore submitted the propriety of making some distinction between these two classes of volunteers.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* thought the hon. baronet alluded particularly to the volunteers of the county of Buckingham, who had acted much to their credit, in coming forward as they did without claiming any exemption; but he could not allow of any distinction between the volunteers of this county, either as to those who entered previous to the war or subsequent to the war. Distinctions between men actuated by such noble motives were invidious. It should not be insinuated, that all the volunteers did not enter from one motive—the glorious one of defending their country, and to preserve its honour. He did therefore beg leave to vindicate the volunteers who entered since this war, as well as those who were in that character before it. Their having become volunteers was purely voluntary; they had no conception of what they are now entitled to by the Act of Parliament; it was impossible they should, for the great bulk of them had entered before that clause in the act had been so much as mentioned, or even hinted at. It was no motive of commutation of duty or exemption that induced the volunteers to come forward; no! it was a spontaneous burst of genuine zeal in their country's cause, unmixed with any thing selfish, uncontaminated with any thing impure; it was a glowing spirit of patriotism, that made them rush forward in the service of their country. This was nothing more than was due to them from him as a member of administration, and, unless he was much deceived, would be paid to them by that country which they were enrolled to serve. Having paid this small and well-deserved tribute to the volunteers, he could not help saying he concurred entirely in the sentiments expressed by the learned gent. (Mr. Giles) on the other side of the House. He was confident that no man in the House, or in the country, would be less disposed to countenance a breach of good faith in any case than his right hon. friend (Mr. Yorke.) The truth was, that in this case he did not depart from good faith, for although five days were sufficient to entitle volunteers to exemption from the militia, and 24 from the army of reserve, yet that was the regulation in time of peace, and he proposed that the attendance should be greater now in time of war. It was not proposed, however, that the alteration should begin to operate until the month of May

next; and even then no volunteer would be bound by it, for then every volunteer would have the option whether he would continue as a volunteer or not; and it was for the house to consider, whether it was worth while to make this proposition for the sake of changing the number of days of attendance from five to twenty-four days. He owned he thought that the improvement that this was likely to introduce into discipline would be worth the experiment, and that the more especially when he reflected that volunteers now by their own consent met a greater number of days than were here proposed. But what he rose chiefly for was, to claim on behalf of all the volunteers, of this country every credit that was due to their zeal, patriotism, and independence, and that there was no invidious distinction to be made between them. The house would determine whether this difference of time was to be adopted.

Mr. *Rose* said, that the learned gent. (Mr. *Giles*) referred in so particular a manner to what he had said, that he was under the necessity of saying a few words in his own vindication. The learned gent. had imputed to him a mischievous speech; now, said Mr. *Rose*, whether my speech or the speech of the learned gent. was most likely to produce mischief, I leave to the committee to determine; and I trust I may leave that matter safely there. He seemed to insinuate that my speech was against the volunteers. There is not one man in this country more a friend from his heart to the volunteers of it than myself. There is no spot near or in the neighbourhood of my house in which there dwells one man who is not a volunteer. Two corps in my neighbourhood are commanded by relations of my own, and a third corps is raised by myself:—I therefore leave it, on these facts, to the Committee to judge whether I am against the volunteer system. What I meant was to have them as perfect in their discipline, so as to render them as efficient as possible, not through the medium of a breach of good faith, for that I am as much an enemy to as the learned gent.; and upon that subject the right hon. gent. has removed every shadow of difficulty, by saying, that if the alteration should take place, such volunteers who disapprove of it shall be at liberty to withdraw. Having quoted the provision of the statute of the last session of parliament upon this subject, the right hon. gent. concluded with saying, that both as a member of Parliament, and as a magistrate and country gent., and in every situation, he had been a friend and zealous supporter of

the volunteer system, and therefore he could not help feeling himself hurt, by having imputed to him a mischievous speech.

Mr. *Giles* disclaimed all idea of imputing to the right hon. gent. any intention of creating mischief by his speech, but he did think that it would have that tendency but for the explanation which followed. He was glad he had started this conversation, because it had produced a declaration that would do away any uneasiness which the volunteers might have felt on the subject of alteration in the terms of their continuance as a body, but now it was openly declared that no alteration could ever take place in the terms on which they entered, without affording them the option to withdraw if they disapproved of such alterations, losing, of course, by so doing, all the exemptions they are now entitled to. Such a declaration was necessary to be made, for it set at rest much uneasiness that might have followed.

The *Attorney-General* observed, that so much had been said on the matter of exemption of volunteers, it was needless for him to add anything, especially as upon that subject there was no difference of opinion. Now, as that was the leading and the only part of this bill that was pressing in point of time, he should submit to his right hon. friend, whether the remaining part of the bill might not as well be deferred until after the recess, to allow gentlemen time to turn it in their minds, and to prepare for its future discussion, for it was not proposed that that part of the bill should begin to operate until the month of May next. If anything that amounted to a breach of good faith could possibly be proposed, which he was assured there could not, by any member of administration, he was sure the house would never assent to it, but perhaps there was no use in dwelling on this measure further now, if his right hon. friend would adopt his suggestion, in postponing the latter part of the bill.

General *Norton* said, it was a fact, that the last Volunteer Act clashed with the army of reserve. If that act had not passed, the 50,000 men would have been long since completed.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* in further reply to Sir W. Young, begged leave most completely to differ from the right hon. baronet, as he was thoroughly convinced that the volunteers, instead of taking any advantage of their situation, were, upon all occasions, actuated by the purest and noblest motives of loyalty, patriotism, and public spirit; they were a body of men whose valour and

disinterestedness conferred an honour on themselves, and shed a lustre on their country:—to see men of rank, independence, and elevated characters enrolling themselves in the ranks of their country, was, in his opinion, a circumstance which conferred the greatest honour on any age or nation.

Sir *W. Wynne* said a few words on the danger of giving the volunteers the option of withdrawing their services.

Mr. *Pattison* said, that in the last war he had a corps of 150 men. On calling them together in April last, when he got permission to raise a second corps of 350 men, he found that 80 of them had entered into the King's service. Since that, several had gone in the same manner, either into his Majesty's service, or as substitutes into the militia, the supplementary militia, or the army of reserve; and though he might have some regret at losing a good soldier, he never thought himself at liberty to interfere to detain them. This was a proof that the volunteer system, instead of impeding, assisted the recruiting service: so far as to the men, now how was the fact as to the officers? This touched him more nearly, as it affected his own family. His eldest son, who had been one of his officers, had gone into the East Norfolk militia; his second son, whom he was educating with the greatest care, to assist him in his commercial pursuits, had conceived so strong a partiality for a military life, and for the King's service, that he held himself under the necessity of yielding to it. He was one of his ensigns, and had never conceived any notion of a military life, till the corps had been ordered to Yarmouth; and now he had written to him in a most pressing manner to obtain him a commission in the King's service, and he would be much obliged to the hon. Secretary if he would procure him one.

Colonel *Craufurd* said, it was true a private may be turned out of his corps for impertinence to his officers; if he was to be turned out by his officer, the case was clear; but if it were to be done by the committee it should be recollected, that the majority of that committee would be privates.

Mr. *Yorke* thought it would be a very difficult matter indeed to define the precise quantum of assistance to be given to the wives and families of such volunteers as were sent on actual service, as that must depend on a variety of circumstances; it must be first ascertained who stood in need of any assistance at all; then, whether those families who sought assistance, were wholly dependent on the professional exertions or manual labour of those persons sent on actual ser-

vise; then the quantum of assistance to be afforded such families, which must vary *ad infinitum*, according to the number and helpless state of such families, &c. &c.—Such has been the difficulty of ascertaining this point, that even in the constitutional militia, where such provisions were always made, it depended on the time of absence and interruption from business, as it frequently happened, after devoting part of the day to drill, they apply the remainder of the day to business, which would consequently diminish in proportion, the assistance his family was to receive from government, &c., these various points required the most mature deliberation, as they were extremely intricate, and should not be precipitated through the House.—The report was ordered to be received to-morrow.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, December 14.

[MINUTES].—Counsel was heard at some length in an appeal cause, *Keighley, v. the East-India Company*. The further hearing was ordered for Friday next.—The Earl of Suffolk informed their lordships, that he wished to deliver his sentiments on the bill, which he understood was now before the other house, respecting the services of the volunteer corps. He, therefore, should take the opportunity, when that bill was introduced, to deliver his sentiments upon it, most probably on Friday.—The Lord Chancellor observed, that it would give him much satisfaction to hear the sentiments of the noble lord, on that day.—The Irish Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill was read a third time, passed, and a message was ordered to be sent to the Commons, acquainting them therewith. Several other bills were also passed, after which their lordships adjourned until to-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, December 14.

[MINUTES].—A message from the lords informed the house, that their lordships had agreed to the English Bank Restriction Bill, the bills for suspending the Habeas Corpus Act, and authorising trials by martial law in Ireland, the English Promissory Note Bill, the bill for preventing distillation from oats in Ireland, the bill for bonding Portugal wines, the Irish Crop Exportation Bill, the Sugar Drawback Bill, and the Curates' Relief Bill.—On the motion of Mr. Hobhouse, the Mutiny Bill was read a second time, and committed for Thursday, the 2d of Feb.—On the motion of Mr. Corry, the house went

into a committee of supply, in which 21,600*l.* Irish currency, being the annual sum, was granted for the service of the trustees of the Linen Board in Ireland. The report was ordered to be received to-morrow and the committee to sit again on Friday. — Mr. Vansittart presented an account of the amount of the sums paid for premiums and bounties under the act of 41 George III. for the better supplying the markets of London and Westminster with fish. Ordered to lie on the table. — Lord Henry Petty moved that the committee, to which the petition of the Sierra Leone Company was referred, have leave to sit notwithstanding the adjournment; and also that the said committee have leave to report their observations. Agreed to. In answer to Mr. Rose, who wished to know whether there was any report from the naval officers connected with the settlement, Lord Henry Petty stated, that a naval officer, who had been a long time on the station, had been examined before the committee.

[ARMY OF RESERVE.] — Mr. *Secretary Yorke* thought it right, before gentlemen separated for the recess, to put the house in possession of an accurate return of the Army of Reserve, the number raised, the number rejected, those that had deserted, those that died, those that were effective, and those deficient. — In making this statement there would be room to admire the exertions the counties had made, though of late those exertions had rather fallen off. The exertion was at first so great, that within six weeks no less a number than 26,740 men were raised. The total number raised on 21st Nov. the latest day to which the returns were made up, was 26,607 in England and Wales. Of these 642 had been rejected 70 were dead, 777 had deserted, 25,500 were effective, and a deficiency of 8,000 still remained to be made up by England and Wales. In Scotland the number raised was 5,500. In Ireland it was upwards of 6,000. Still a considerable deficiency remained; yet putting it out of the question, whether this was the best mode of raising a defensive force, it must be allowed that it had supplied in a very short time a great number of men. This return, therefore, was thought useful, in order to stimulate the counties to complete their numbers; and he should move, that by the time the House should meet again, another return should be made, by which it would be seen in what proportion the quotas of the different counties were complete or imperfect. He concluded with moving, that there be laid before the house an account of the number of men raised for

the royal army of reserve, distinguishing the counties, those who had been rejected, those who died, those who were effective and present, together with the numbers due, including casualties. — Ordered.

[VOLUNTEER EXEMPTION BILL.] — On the order of the day being read, that this bill be read a third time,

Mr. *Windham* said, he was much grieved, that by not being present in the house the night before, he had lost the opportunity of offering some suggestions, which would, he conceived, materially have improved the bill. He did not expect that the report would have been brought up before this day, and as it was competent to offer any improvements that occurred, upon the report, he had been less anxious to attend in his place yesterday. It was true, that Reports were, in cases of urgency, immediately received: but this was not a case of urgency: and the present ministers ought to have known more than any other men the propriety of leaving every measure before the house for as long a time as possible. The very bill which they now pressed forward so unnecessarily arose from that hasty spirit of legislation which left in every act doubts and ambiguities requiring further acts to remove them. The hon. gentlemen seemed particularly prone to this course of proceeding. They were fond of driving to an inch, of running every thing to the last moment. The consequence was, as it necessarily must be, that being obliged to act in a hurry, whatever they did was crude, ill-considered, and full of mistakes. There were two modes, Dr. Johnson had observed, of composition; one in which the several parts received from the writer, before they issued from his mind, all the perfection which he hoped to give to them; the other, in which they were committed to paper in the first instance to be improved by subsequent correction. The hon. gentlemen, by the circumstances in which they placed themselves so constantly, seemed to prefer the latter of these modes. They threw down their first loose thoughts in an act of Parliament, trusting to future consideration and experience to bring them to something of a better shape. An act of Parliament was their foul copy, in which it did not signify how many faults there were, as the Legislature would be able afterwards to set them right. Their preference to this mode was founded, he supposed, upon the observation of the poet, that poets

Lost half the praise they should have got,
Were it but known, what they discreetly blot.

The hon. Gentlemen did not chose to lose

this praise. They chose to compose in public; and to have full credit both for their first conceptions, and for the successive improvements which changed them often to something utterly unlike what they had been originally. Though by this course of proceeding of the hon. gentlemen in the present instance, he had lost the opportunity of suggesting his amendment in a stage when it might have been received, he should nevertheless mention it, with a view to occasions, when the volunteer system might be again under discussion. It was in fact, however, no more than what he had already urged on more occasions than one, viz. the putting a stop to exemptions with respect to those who should enter into volunteer corps in future. To abolish those already subsisting was, he was aware, difficult, and might perhaps be impossible. Certainly it ought not to be attempted, if it could not be put upon a footing to make it consistent with good faith. But the granting such exemptions in future, and continuing by design what had got a place in the system only by chance and against the intention of its authors, was a proceeding for which no rational motive could be assigned, and which he could not hear without great surprize as well as concern, was to make part of the present bill. What he had further to object being of a sort, which could not have been corrected by an amendment or clause was as proper (or more proper), to be urged on that day as on the day before. It was an objection to the whole system. While the right of exemption produced the effect on the one hand of defrauding the army, the army of reserve and the militia, by contracting the population, from which they were to be supplied, it oppressed the whole country, and particularly the lower orders, to a degree the most grievous, and by means the most intolerable that were ever admitted deliberately, into the institutions of any state. Where did any one ever hear, except as matter of complaint and reprobation, of a power such as that vested in the leaders of volunteer corps, whether one or many, of deciding arbitrarily and without appeal, who should or should not be liable to a ballot, the effects of which would be to the persons on whom it might fall, a fine of 40 or 50 guineas? These were sums which to the bulk of those who might be liable to them, would be nothing less than absolute ruin; at the same time that it might be equally ruin to them to quit their trades and their families and to engage for a service of five years, as soldiers. Such a power lodged in the hands of a commandant where the constitution of

the corps was monarchical, or in a committee or sub-committee, where its form was republican or democratical, would rank hereafter for opposition or abuse, with any of those most famous in history—with the dispensing power or powers of granting indulgences. It was not that this power was applied abusively or oppressively, in many or perhaps in any instances, at present; but it could hardly fail to be so in the end, and in the mean-while must be considered as one wholly out of the course of all ordinary proceedings, and for which it was hardly possible to find a fit depositary. Such a power must however somewhere exist, supposing the privilege of exemption to continue. for it was impossible to imagine, that every one could be allowed to enter into a volunteer corps that pleased: and he or they, who had the power of admission or rejection, must possess the power here spoken of, improper and unsafe as that power might be. The only remedy was, either to abolish exemptions, or to abolish volunteer corps. It seemed hardly possible to correct the evil by regulation. Nor was it to be conceived, that such evil had now become small, because the greater part of the militia and army of reserve were raised, and ballots of consequence to the same extent were no longer wanted. To the same extent they certainly would not be wanted; but it must be considered at the same time, that they would have to operate upon diminished numbers: so that to supply and maintain the present force, that is to say, to make good what was then wanting, and afterwards to maintain the whole (for which latter purpose too, as was obvious, more would be required the larger was the force already raised), would render these ballots perhaps not much less burthensome than they had been at any preceding period.—So much as to the oppression of this system, armed as it was with a power such as he had described, which the present bill both confirmed and extended, and which it seemed extremely difficult to take away. Its injurious effect on all the other species of force he must still maintain, notwithstanding the specious statements made on the other side. First, as to the fact. Whatever the numbers might be, produced by recruiting during the last seven months, as compared with the produce of an equal number of months during an antecedent period, and however small the proportional diminution which appeared to have taken place in the latter instance; he must still insist upon some strong and hard facts, namely, that in many regiments the return per month was not more

than two, and sometimes not so much: and that in one of the largest recruiting districts, comprising many extensive and not unfavourable counties, the rate of recruiting *per* month was not more than seven or eight. Now, when this was so, let the gross numbers be what they would, he must contend that recruiting was nearly at a stand, taking the question upon the footing on which it ought to be taken, as a comparison between the supply and consumption, between what was gained to the army in recruits, and what was lost by desertion, death, invaliding, and discharges. But, next as to the reasoning. Proportion, which the hon. gentlemen dwelt so much upon, that is to say, the proportionate abatement in the numbers at that time recruited, compared with those recruited in equal periods formerly, was not that on which the question properly turned. Proportion in abstract quantities had place among the smallest as perfectly as among the greatest. If the hon. gentlemen had a mind to be very deeply learned, they might tell us of the proportion of one *nothing* to another *nothing*; and such a consideration would be very far from inapplicable to much of their recruiting. But in common concerns they must apply to proportion, what is said of law, *de minimis non curat lex*. If a regiment, which formerly recruited three a month, now recruited two, you were not obliged to say, that recruiting in that regiment had declined one third, nor on the other hand could you be entitled to say, that it had declined *only* one-third. Such variations would happen by chance, and by a law consequently wholly different from that of proportion. No conclusion, therefore, could be drawn from such instances separately considered: and if a judgment were to be formed, as it ought to be, from the whole state of facts taken together, it would be the very reverse of that meant to be established by the hon. gentlemen; who instead of saying 'the recruiting during the existence of these causes (*viz.* the immense bounties; the great extent of the militia force; the 400,000 men locked up as volunteers, &c. &c.) has been so and so; therefore these causes have not operated to its disadvantage,' ought to say, 'the recruiting being what it is, notwithstanding the operation of these causes, which must have acted so powerfully against it, what would it not have been, had these been removed, and other new causes, which must be presumed to have arisen, have been left to produce their natural effect?' This he must contend was the legitimate conclusion. It was not in the nature of things, that causes

such as he had enumerated, and were obvious to every one's observation, must not have some effect in checking the progress of recruiting. To take only one; could any man in his senses suppose, that with fifty guineas offered for service in the army of reserve, men would go on to enter for the line, at a bounty of five or ten, in the same manner as if no such competition existed? If the recruiting, therefore, kept up to nearly its former amount, as was contended by the hon. gentlemen, there must have been something to counteract the effect of these impediments; and this something it was not difficult to find. It was a state of war; it was the threat of invasion; it was the *stimulus* of the compulsory service; the discharge of numbers of workmen in consequence of temporary checks to trade; the general military spirit, that filled and animated every part of the country. These circumstances were of force sufficient to uphold to a certain degree, the recruiting service, even in spite of the causes which tended to depress and to annihilate it. How far might they not have carried it, had there been nothing on the other side to counteract their effects?—The objection, therefore, to the volunteer system as contributing with other causes, to destroy the recruiting of the army, continued in full force, even admitting the statements of the hon. gentlemen: and he must continue to urge these objections, even though he should be asked, as he was the other night, why he would persist in decrying a system, which, whether right or wrong, was now fixed and incapable of being altered? His answer was, that it was not fixed, but must, on the contrary, and infallibly would, and that, at no distant period, come again under revision; and that it was with a view to that period, that these observations were made; that the defects of this system were such as would never suffer it to go on long as it was; and that, if other causes were wanting, the very failure of its funds must soon bring it again before Parliament. Unless Parliament greased the wheels the machine must soon stand still. He wished, therefore, that before that time, gentlemen would be prepared with their opinions on the several parts of the measure; would consider how far the objections were valid; how far the parts objected to might be corrected or got rid of; and, failing of that, whether the whole system would not require to be new cast, and in a great degree, possibly, to be done away.

Mr. Hiley Addington.—Sir, the right hon. gent. who just sat down seems very desirous of having the last word on the subject now

before the House. I hope, however, I shall be permitted to express for the first, and perhaps the last time, my sentiments upon it. There are many points of the right hon. gentleman's speech on which I wish to make a few observations. The right hon. gent. and his associates, in speaking of the volunteers, always ground what they say on a solitary instance. In the course of his speech, the right hon. gent. stated, that the subscriptions which have been raised to pay the expense of the formation of the corps of volunteers would soon be exhausted, and that then they will be obliged to call on government to give them assistance for their future maintenance. Nothing can be more futile than this observation. In the first place, I conceive that the right hon. gent. is completely misinformed in supposing, that subscriptions of the nature which he mentioned are raised at all for the formation of corps of volunteers. I believe that there are many instances to the contrary; and I can assure the House, as one instance, that towards the formation of a large corps which I have the honour and the happiness to command, there has been no subscription at all. The men were actually clothed out of the allowance made by government with a very inconsiderable addition; and I feel a pride in stating, that not the smallest objection has been made by one individual to clothing of that description. It was not cloth at forty shillings a yard, to be sure, but the corps was extremely contented, and were not quite of an unsoldier like appearance. Where there have been subscriptions, I conceive that they were directed principally to this object, and I am therefore at a loss to conceive how government need apprehend, even in the most distant perspective, that any call will be made on the public purse to afford any assistance, especially as it was generally understood that the clothing was to last three years.—The right hon. gentleman has asserted, that no less a bounty than 50*l.* per man has been given to substitutes for the army of reserve. Gentlemen on the other side of the House were fond of adverting to the solitary instance of the metropolis. To that fact I cannot speak; but I can assert, from my own knowledge, that in the county in which I reside, the price of a substitute is never more than 25 guineas, sometimes 20, and the average is 22.—In the same way, the right hon. gent. has argued on the subject of committees. A solitary instance was stated on a former night, of a corps being governed by a committee. *Ab uno disce omnes*, is hardly a fair way of judging. I have seen many corps of volun-

teers, and have heard of more, but I know of no such regulations. The system is a bad one; nothing should induce me to hold any commission in such a corps, or to have any thing to do with it. It is an unfair mode of arguing, to infer, that because there was one solitary instance, it must be the general description of volunteer corps. I have, indeed, read such arguments of late, but I little expected to have heard them urged by gentlemen of enlightened understandings.—As to the injury done to the recruiting service, that point has been completely answered by the statement of the Secretary at War, and by other gentlemen. Facts cannot be done away by the loose and vague opinions of individuals. They are so unanswerable, that I shall not dwell on this objection.—I mean nothing offensive to the right hon. gent. in what I am going to add: but I must once for all express my grief and my astonishment, that the right hon. gent. should have adopted, and now persevere in a course of language, disparaging, discountenancing, and discrediting a description of men, on whose services the safety of the country not a little depends. The right hon. gent. perhaps, despises popularity; I am nevertheless astonished that, without any adequate reason, he should set himself in opposition to the universal voice. But I will tell that right hon. gent. that every corner of the kingdom echoes its reprobation of the language which he has held since the meeting of Parliament. People cannot comprehend, posterity will scarcely believe, that in a moment of danger so unparalleled, one individual could be found, who would gravely assert, that 400,000 Britons in arms were not only doing no good, but were even injurious to the interests and defence of the country. Is the right hon. gent. so grossly ignorant of ancient and modern history, as not to know what glorious exploits have been performed by the patriotic and voluntary energy of men like our volunteers? Such examples will not be lost, I am confident, on my countrymen. If real danger should present itself, what may not be expected from men, animated with one spirit, fired with an unexampled unanimity, to take arms in defence of a monarch whom they love, of a constitution which they revere, of an independence which they cherish, and for the protection of every thing that can be valuable and precious to them as men and as Englishmen.

Mr. *Windham*, in explanation, observed, that he had never said that 400,000 men in arms would be of no use.

Mr. *Alderman Price*, in order to set the

right hon. gent. (Mr. Windham) right as to the subscriptions which were set on foot in the metropolis, thought it his duty to state, that the object of these subscriptions was to defray those charges for which the corps were not entitled to call upon government, and the sums subscribed were to such an amount that they could not be expended for years; neither was it an idea with these volunteers, that they were only to be shewn to the enemy in their red coats; they exercised and manœuvred almost every day in all the evolutions necessary for a regular army. As to the committee they only managed the money: they never interfered with the discipline of the men. He wished that adjutants should be added to the corps, but not field officers. As a proof that this was the general wish, many of the corps had already procured adjutants, and settled on them an adequate income. They were, in fact, in every respect effective soldiers, and ready to act as such wherever the appearance of the enemy required. As to the bounties for the army of reserve, 26 guineas was the highest sum given in the metropolis. Before he sat down, he should just ask the Sec. at War, why the marine and river fencibles were not noticed in the return of the volunteer corps? Was it from their being a force of an extraordinary description, which could not exactly be classed with the others.

Mr. *Secretary Yorke* had not inquired into the reason of the omission alluded to by the worthy alderman; but he supposed it was because the corps mentioned by him were not understood to be of the description to which the return was to apply. Probably they were understood to belong to the Admiralty.

Colonel *Craufurd* complained that his right hon. friend below (Mr. Windham) had been grossly misrepresented. He did not think that 400,000 men could be of no advantage to the country. On the contrary both he and his honourable friend gave the volunteers the highest credit? they only complained of the manner in which they were constituted, and that they had a tendency to starve the regular forces. He expressed his regret that any exemptions had ever been granted. He believed it had been by accidents. It was doubtful whether it was intended, even by ministers themselves, to give these exemptions; for, so late as the 23d of Sept. they had consulted his Majesty's Attorney-General whether they were to be given. If he had himself understood that they were to be given, he would have come down prepared to oppose them. As to the volunteers in general, he was of

opinion, that they ought to be carried to the highest perfection of which they were capable, and he was, therefore, sorry, that the suggestion of a right hon. gent. (Mr. Pitt), not then in his place, respecting the appointment of field officers had not been adopted. He was sure the volunteers themselves would be happy to have the benefit of the instruction of experienced officers, to enable them to perform their duty in the field, with honour to themselves, and advantage to their country; if they were really actuated by a spirit of patriotism, as he had no doubt they were, so far from feeling discontented, therefore, at such appointments, which was urged as the first objection against this useful regulation, there was every reason to conclude that they would be happy at the adoption of it. Another objection, that it would be impossible to procure a sufficient number of officers from the line, would be obviated, when it was considered, that an English regiment of about 800 men, had an establishment of double the number of officers, than a similar battalion of any other European troops. It had been said, that though the volunteer corps would object to field officers, they would have no difficulty in receiving adjutants; but, it was essential to have the officers instructed as well as the privates, and he was of opinion, that it would be inconsistent with military propriety, that an adjutant, who generally held the rank of lieutenant, should instruct the captains, and even field officers. With respect to the volunteers themselves, what had been said by his right hon. friend (Mr. Windham) on the subject, had been so much misconceived in the House, and so much misrepresented out of it, that he felt disposed, as he was on his legs, to set gentlemen right on that head. He had attended to his right hon. friend as much as any hon. member, and he had never heard him say any thing that could warrant an inference, that 400,000 Britons in arms, so far from being of service, would be injurious to the cause in which they were engaged. His right hon. friend was not so little acquainted with the great deeds which history related to have been performed by the sole impulse of spirit, without discipline, and in many instances without arms. The Swiss peasants, impelled by that spirit, had attacked the French army with no other arms than pitch forks. He had himself witnessed with grief the prowess which the Irish peasantry, impelled by a mistaken spirit, had displayed in repeatedly attacking the King's troops with no other weapons than what could be easily put into the hand of every peasant, a pike. There

were living those who had seen similar instances of bravery in the Scotch peasants. He was sure that this country, with the spirit inspired by the best of causes, the best of Sovereigns, and a liberty such as no other nation could boast, would display as much valour as any other country at any other time. Could it then be supposed, that any man would venture to assert that 400,000 Britons, in such a cause, with whatever gallantry they may attack an enemy's forces, could do no service? All that his right hon. friend contended was, that they would not be so effective, and though history furnished us with examples of great victories gained by undisciplined troops, there was no doubt that disciplined troops were the best. When we trusted to the army, we trusted to an army which was tried, and which had proved itself in every war, and in no war more than in the last, equal (for he would not flatter the British army by saying superior) to the French. He had heard the French army abused as a set of conscripts dragged into the service. These conscripts, by whatever means they were brought together, formed as good an army as any in Europe, and such an enemy the volunteers should expect to meet in them, animated by as high an enthusiasm as theirs, though not of so good a nature.

Sir *William Young* stated, that he was particularly anxious, as this would most likely be the last time he should have an opportunity, of declaring that there were two descriptions of volunteers, and that the exemptions adopted in regard to those two descriptions ought to be extremely different. This was a point, he thought, essential to the interest of the country. A strong line of demarkation ought to be made. He had looked into the acts of Parliament on the subject of the volunteer exemptions, and he found that he was borne out in what he then asserted, that the volunteers under the 42d of the King, were of a different class in the eye of the legislature from the present volunteers, who had no regulation but that of the 43d of the King. The latter were a very large body of men, by whose exemption the great mass of the population of the country was greatly affected; they impeded very much indeed the progress of the army of reserve, for three-fourths of them were of the first class of the Defence Act, unmarried men under the age of thirty: this was a serious matter: they ought not to have these exemptions, for it was greatly inconvenient to the country. As to the volunteers under the 42d of the King, who were the only true volunteers, in the proper

sense of the word, for they came forward without any view of exemption; they were justly entitled to every exemption; they were in number from 69,000 to 70,000, and they were a body of men, on whom the country need not less rely for patriotism than for discipline; but the other great body which had been lately raised, and had entered, was not so properly called a body of volunteers, although that name had been given to them. They were not at first to have been exempted, either from the militia or the army of reserve: by the act of the 17th of July, no intention was expressed of exempting any of them either from the militia, army of reserve, or other service; but on the 11th of August, when many gentlemen had gone into the country in hopes of serving it as essentially as they could by attending that House, a clause crept into a bill for regulating the volunteer cavalry, by which all this immense body of men were exempted from all other services, as it was now to be interpreted by the present bill, but which could hardly have been then so intended, as indeed was to be gathered by the very necessity there was now of explaining that act. This was a matter worthy the serious attention of the House at some future period. By these 300,000 men being thus entitled to exemption from the militia and the army of reserve, and three-fourths of them being of the first class of requisition under the Defence Act, being unmarried men under the age of thirty, this threw all the ballots almost upon men who had families, and they wishing to remain with and provide for them, of course became eager for substitutes, so that a great competition arose among them, and the effect was the bounty for substitutes became enormous. These were matters to be considered gravely; not that he wished our military strength to be diminished by any means; no, we must continue that strength while the affairs of Europe wore their present aspect. It was no matter to us whether Buonaparte existed or not, while France was the military nation she was, we must bear a relative proportion to that military power. He admitted, however, that no addition ought to be made to the condition of any man who entered into his military service that would be a breach of faith.—The hon. baronet then took up the subject of popularity, as stated by Mr. Hiley Addington, and said, that his right hon. friend (Mr. Windham) could never be unpopular among those who knew how to value a man versed in ancient, and intimately acquainted with every branch of modern learning, who knew how to esteem private

worth and public virtue. As to the "gross ignorance" which the right hon. gent. had thought proper to apply to his right hon. friend, he was astonished, and he believed that every member present was also astonished, that it should ever have entered into the head of that gentleman to make an insinuation of so extravagant a nature.—He concluded by insisting on the distinction which he had taken between the two classes of volunteers, those of the 42d, and those of the 43d of the King; the first he thought entitled to all exemptions, the other to none.

Colonel *Calcraft*, in answer to what had fallen from the worthy alderman (*Price*), thought that the facility of recruiting in provincial districts, as compared with the difficulty stated to exist in London, did not arise from the cause stated by the worthy alderman, namely, the giving of higher bounties in the former than in the latter, but from the circumstance of a vast number of working artisans being dismissed from their employment at Birmingham, Sheffield, Manchester, and various other manufacturing towns, as the returns from those towns would prove. These men, when they were unemployed, and saw no chance of being reinstated, immediately formed the idea of enlisting in the line or militia; and instead of going from town to town to look for higher bounties, repaired to the next town where they could be received; and this would account for the difference of facility in raising recruits in the country. With respect to the volunteers themselves, as he had not had an opportunity of speaking his sentiments, he wished to say a few words. It had been pretty much the fashion to charge a right hon. gent. near him (*Mr. Windham*) with disparaging those corps, as utterly useless and unfit for service. He, for one, never conceived the arguments of that right hon. gent. in that view, but merely as meaning that his Majesty's ministers did not use the military population of the country in the way which he thought most efficient. For his own part, however, he felt no disposition to undervalue the services of the volunteers; on the contrary, he thought they would be rendered highly serviceable and efficient for the defence of the country. As to discipline, however, as compared with troops of the line, or established militia, that was out of the question. The nature of the service, and the opportunities that had occurred for training the volunteers, admitted of no comparison with the other troops. In aid of those troops, however, he thought they would form an important branch of the pub-

lic force; and he thought that as that service must depend chiefly on the high spirit and good will of the corps, a liberal conduct from those who were to direct their operations should be observed, and that government should not be over nice or strict in the minutest details of their discipline.

Mr. Secretary Yorke suggested to the hon. baronet (*Sir W. Young*) who spoke last but one, to read and consider the act of the 42d of his Majesty, as he seemed not to be aware of its provisions. Referring to the remark of the last speaker, which would imply some want of patriotism and public spirit in London, he had to observe, that from one instance which came within his own knowledge, that insinuation would not appear to apply. When he was Secretary at War, an offer was made to him by the Drapers' Company of London, immediately after the commencement of the war, to raise 200 or 300 men for the public service, to be attached to any regiment of the line which government might think proper. This proposal he submitted to the consideration of H. R. H. the Duke of York, and General Hewitt, and it was the opinion of those high authorities, that it would be imprudent to accede to it, for this reason, that it was found that this respectable and wealthy company had not the means, through their own influence and connexions, to raise the number of men specified; and that the probability was, they would offer such high bounties as would interfere with, and do much injury to, the ordinary course of recruiting for the regular army. This instance he mentioned merely as an answer to the statement, that the city of London was not sufficiently forward to contribute to the public defence; and he had no doubt, had the offer he described been accepted, that many others of a similar nature would have been made.

Mr. Giles wished to know, whether the proportion of the army of reserve, which London was to furnish was yet complete?

Mr. Secretary Yorke stated, that there was a deficiency in the city quota, as well as in that of Middlesex; but that such deficiencies arose, not from the tardiness of those with whom the duty of providing the men rested, but from the frequency of desertion, which took place to a greater extent in this city than in any other district; and this he conceived it impossible to prevent. It arose from the nature of our police, any change in which, however, he could never persuade himself to propose or to meditate.

Mr. Giles argued, that from the reading of the Volunteer Act, the distinction taken by the hon. baronet (*Sir W. Young*) was

unfounded. This act described only two descriptions of service, namely, volunteers and voluntary services; and the fact was, that not one of the latter description was entitled to exemptions. The hon. baronet had been also erroneous in stating, that the prospect of exemption from the militia and the army of reserve influenced the volunteers; in contradiction to that assertion, he had to mention a fact which he knew, in consequence of the situation which he held as one of the deputy lieutenants of Hertfordshire, namely, that the number of volunteers accepted in that county was 2,800, and the number who offered for voluntary services were 6,600. The latter were not entitled to, nor did they ever look for exemptions; though the hon. baronet had stated generally, that almost all the men in the country, capable of military service, were locked up in the volunteers; and that of course the exemptions were so extensive, that it would be found quite impossible to provide recruits for the regular army. Upon inquiry he had no doubt that such circumstances as he had described in Hertfordshire, would be met with generally throughout the kingdom.

Sir *William Young* said, that his meaning was misconceived by the hon. member who spoke last.

Dr. *Laurence* rose, and in a speech of considerable length, took a general view, as well of the volunteer system, as of the conduct of his Majesty's ministers, in adopting that system, going over nearly the same ground which had been traced, both on this and on former nights by Mr. Windham, and by the learned doctor himself. It had been the fashion, he said, for his Majesty's ministers and their supporters, to endeavour to calumniate, and run down the characters of those men who have the honesty and the boldness to deliver their candid sentiments in that house, in opposition to the measures of ministers, which they conceived to be impolitic; regardless of that temporary popularity which ministers were so anxious to obtain from gratifying the whim of the moment without looking to future results. Of this illiberal disposition too many instances had been given with respect to the conduct of his right hon. friend (Mr. Windham), the purity of whose motives no man could question, and the ability of whose mind even his adversaries were forced to acknowledge; but yet he was the subject of much undeserved censure, and extremely culpable misrepresentation. The latter, some persons out of doors seemed encouraged to promote; and the effect of that

misrepresentation in the circles of the minister's friends, was quoted in that House as an objection to his right hon. friend's opinion. A right hon. gent. on the other side of the House, whom he did not now see in his place (Mr. H. Addington), had this night stated, in a very confident tone, that his right hon. friend was unpopular; he had expressed his astonishment at the sedulous perseverance of his right hon. friend, in reprobating the volunteers, and asserted that every corner of the country echoed with censure, disapprobation, and disgust, at the conduct of his right hon. friend. What, he would ask, was the cry of unpopularity, even if it attached to a particular course of policy, to weigh with the mind of an enlightened statesman, to urge him to the abandonment of that course, against the conviction of his own judgment? The idea was too ridiculous to be entertained. No sound politician could support it. That popularity was highly desirable, was an indisputable proposition, because it was, independently of other considerations, a powerful instrument for a politician to work with; and, whatever the advocates of ministers might assert or insinuate, he would contend, that his right hon. friend did possess a very high degree of popularity, which was particularly owing to his opposition to the volunteer system. This fact he knew from his acquaintance with the sentiments of the people throughout the country, and particularly those of the more intelligent description. He said he was himself present when a large company, consisting principally of the friends of administration, drank that gentleman's health, and made him the bearer of a complimentary message to him, for the part he had taken with regard to this subject. The learned member observed, that the company he alluded to was composed of men whose talents and characters were such as to entitle their opinion to respect—men to be esteemed by whom was indeed a flattering evidence of the popularity which his right hon. friend enjoyed; and he could not help saying, that any people who could condemn the motives which manifestly actuated his right hon. friend, or who could not respect the line of public conduct which he had pursued, were incapable of understanding their own interests, were scarcely worthy to be served. Yet however much he regarded public opinion, however much he respected popularity, he must observe, that too much was generally said in that House about following the sentiments of the people, for if the people

were always to be followed, for what purpose were some persons selected to lead? No rational man would wish to render himself obnoxious to the people, but yet, no intelligent or dignified statesman would shrink from his purpose from fear of popularity, for it was notorious that the people were too apt to consult their immediate ease, and but seldom to look to future interests, however important they might be. Ministers, if they were wise, should rather encourage, than attempt to depreciate an opposition, from which they might obtain the most useful advice. In many cases, indeed, they had acted upon advice derived from that quarter, although so forward to traduce its consequence, at the time it was offered. Ministers were told by his right hon. friend, that if the dangers of the country were fully made known, the spirit of the people would be found ready to meet it, and this appeared from the result; but the complaint of his right hon. friend now was, that the spirit was ill directed, that the flower of the military strength of the country was locked up in the volunteer system, and that the volunteers were governed by committees which were likely to become the focus of democracy. That such committees did exist, was a fact quite notorious, and that six privates had, from their institution, the power of governing a whole corps, officers included, and of arranging every thing connected with its internal conduct, enforcing the attendance of members, infliction of fines, &c.—With respect to the allusions made to the amount of the bounties given to the substitutes for the Army of Reserve, he could say, from his own knowledge, that not less than 50 guineas were offered for substitutes in Middlesex. A man was known to hold a paper pasted on the top of a pole at Charing Cross, with an inscription of “50 guineas for a substitute;” and his hon. friend had said that 100 guineas had been advertised for two substitutes at the Market Place of Norwich. To prove the enormous bounties offered, in contradiction to the statement of an hon. gent. on the opposite side of the House, he could quote many other instances, but it was unnecessary, and would only serve to prolong the debate.—The learned member concluded with accusing ministers of running away from their duty, and declaring, that he should always feel proud of having acted with his right hon. friend, in opposition to their system, whatever animadversion might be made upon him in that House, or whatever calumnies might

be propagated respecting him out of doors, because he was equally satisfied of the purity of his right hon. friend's motives, and the profound wisdom of his political conceptions.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* began by saying, that the learned member had concluded with a very heavy charge indeed, upon his Majesty's ministers, namely, that they had deserted their duties and had given encouragement to a spirit of calumny; but to whom the charge of dealing in groundless slander and detraction most properly applied, he would leave it to the House and the public to judge. Of the duty of a member of Parliament he was fully aware; and no man respected that duty more than he did. He knew, that consistently with that duty, every member of that House was bound to examine, and entitled to state fully, his opinion upon every public measure. He should be sorry to see that disposition damped by any fear of animadversion, or that the exercise of such an important right should become the subject of calumny. He admitted fully that a statesman should prefer the interests of the people to every other consideration, and that unpopularity should not restrain him from pursuing the course of measures which his judgment prescribed. For popularity properly understood, he professed the highest respect, and should always feel a proper solicitude: but, that ministers had ever betrayed any idle vain wish for popularity in the system they had acted upon, as had been insinuated, he most pointedly denied. To what part of their conduct could the charge of endeavouring to court the people, be applied? Was it to be detected in their financial arrangements? Was it in the quantity of taxes they had imposed on the country? It would be recollected, on this point that immediately after the conclusion of the last peace, an addition was made to the public taxes, which was equal to half the amount of the whole interest on the national debt, previous to the war which that peace terminated, and at the commencement of the present war, a further addition was made of twelve millions. From this it appeared that no less than 17 millions were added to the taxation of the country within the short space of 14 months. That is, not less than seven millions more than the whole interest of the national debt previous to the commencement of the last war. The financial proceedings, therefore, of ministers could not be said to manifest any very strong disposition to conciliate popular favour; and could that disposition be

seen in their conduct with respect to the military and naval departments? Did their keeping up 50,000 seamen during peace, together with a large military establishment, imply an extraordinary desire for popularity? In a word, did not every measure of ministers carry with it the determination to provide for the honour, the interests, and the safety of the country? He would put it to the candour and common sense of any man, whether, in their proceedings, they were in the least degree influenced by any base, unmanly, dishonourable, wish to court popularity, and whether they had in any instance shewn the still more dishonourable wish, to detract from, or calumniate any member for the performance of his duty? For himself, and his colleagues, he could say, they despised a practice so illiberal and so vile, and he was equally certain that his right hon. relation, (Mr. H. Addington), to whose words some allusion had been made, would condemn any thing like it. The words alluded to, which were merely, that the sentiments which the right hon. gent. (Mr. Windham) no doubt thought it his duty to deliver in that House, made a very unfavourable impression abroad; and that his observations upon the volunteers were particularly ill-received. No doubt, however, the right hon. gent. felt his conduct justified in his own mind, but yet it was very natural to suppose, that the disposition he had upon all occasions, shown to depreciate the volunteers, would be considered a very ungracious return to them for their patriotic zeal, and for the diligent application of their time, to acquire a knowledge of the means necessary to defend their country. That his Majesty's ministers attempted by any means to traduce the character of the right hon. gent. was an unfounded accusation; but that they complained of his conduct was an undoubted fact. They complained of the right hon. gent., and the right hon. gentleman who acted with him, because they condemned indiscriminately, every measure that they had taken since their accession to his Majesty's confidence. They complained of the right hon. gent., because he reprobated their arrangements respecting the militia, though that body was constituted precisely as it existed at the time that right hon. gent. was in office. They complained of him, because he called forth all his efforts to decry the system of the volunteers, although it was no deviation whatever from that which prevailed when the right hon. gent. was in office; but now it appears that the right hon. gent. would prefer an armed peasantry. In short, it was, because he arraigned

every thing they proposed, that they complained.—The right hon. gent. on the subject of the volunteers, had always argued as if ministers looked to that body as every thing, which they regarded only as an important ingredient in the public force. They felt, that it was a principle never to be lost sight of, that our security materially depended on the diversified construction of our national army, and that in a country situated as ours is it would be impossible to array in a regular army, any very considerable portion of our population; because it would be inconsistent with their industry and their habits, and injurious to the vital interests of the nation. In addition to the volunteers, we had, it was to be remembered, a regular army, and a militia, much greater than ever existed at any period, that the right honourable gentleman was in office, and yet, he was heard perpetually to allege the inadequate state of preparation for the defence of the country. Among the singular modes of attack upon ministers, resorted to by the right hon. gent. and his advocates, it was observable that they uniformly took the deductions from their own reasoning as facts, and generally relied on them as such. They concluded that at the peace the regular force of the country would be reduced, and therefore that it was reduced; but the fact was, and he had made inquiry to ascertain it, that from the whole of the infantry only 1500 men had been discharged, of whom 1000 were from the guards, as being under sized, and otherwise unfit for service. The statements of the right hon. gent. were, therefore, as to this point, upon which he and his coadjutors had often dwelt, egregiously exaggerated. Their assertions with respect to the progress which recruiting for the regular army had made since the commencement of the war, were equally groundless. For, on the contrary, instead of such recruiting being at a stand, as they alleged, the army had obtained 7000 recruits from that army of reserve which that right hon. gent. so strongly condemned; and upon a comparison of the period which elapsed since the war commenced with the same progress of time during the last peace, it appeared, that more men had been obtained by recruiting within the former period, notwithstanding the competition which ordinary recruiting had to encounter in the high bounties offered for substitutes in the army of reserve, the amount of militia, and the exemptions granted to volunteers in the one instance, and the solicitude which must have assisted in the other instance to fill up regiments, and the facility of obtain-

ing recruits in consequence of the militia being disbanded, &c. This consideration would surely be admitted by the right hon. gent. to be a strong proof of activity in the recruiting service, and it must be evident that his apprehensions upon this head had been quite unfounded; for, upon the whole, it would appear that the regular army had obtained, within the short space of seven months, no less than 15,000 recruits. So much for the outcry raised by the right hon. gent. and his party, as to the state of our means for the defence of the country, and the exertions which ministers have made, seconded by the wisdom, energy, and zeal of Parliament and the people, to give to every department of the public force ample resources to meet the exigencies, to avert the dangers of the present crisis, and to oblige the enemy to feel the vanity and wildness of the calculations which urged him to occasion that crisis!

Mr. *Windham* denied that he ever meant to disparage the volunteers; and said that his remarks upon the reduction of the army previous to the commencement of the war, referred to the disbanding of the foreign corps in our service which was a proceeding that he would ever condemn.—After a few other remarks from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he bill was read a third time and passed.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, December 15.

[MINUTES.]—The royal assent was given, by commission, to the Malt Tax Bill, the Place and Pension Duty, the Irish Habeas Corpus Suspension, the Irish Martial Law, the Seamen's Desertion, the Bank Restriction, the British Sugar Bounty Drawback, the Irish Provision Import, the Irish Oats Distillation, the Small Notes, the East India Bonds Duty, the Annual Indemnity, the Curates' Relief, and the Portugal Wines Bonding Bills. The Lords Commissioners were, the Lord Chancellor, the Earl of Roslin, and Lord Walsingham.—After some routine and private business was disposed of, Mr. Vansittart, accompanied by several members, brought up from the House of Commons, the Volunteer Corps Regulation Bill. The bill was forthwith read a first time; and, on the motion of Lord Walsingham, ordered to be printed. His Lordship took the opportunity to state, that should the prints be on the table to-morrow, it was his intention then to move for the second reading of the bill.—Adjourned till to-morrow.

VOL. I.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, December 15.

[MINUTES.]—The Deputy Usher of the Black Rod appeared at the bar of the House, and desired its attendance in the House of Peers. The Speaker, attended by several members, accordingly proceeded to the Upper House, where the royal assent was given by commission, to the Malt Duty Bill, the Pension Duty Bill, the Curates' Relief Bill, the Irish Habeas Corpus Bill, the Irish Martial Law Bill, the East India Bonds Bill, the Irish Sugar Drawbacks Bill, the Irish Oats Distillation Prohibition Bill, and the Portugal Wine Bonding Bill.—On their return, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, he rose to move, that the House should, at its rising, adjourn to Monday next. Previous to the question being put, he observed, that perhaps, it would be proper to give notice of his intention of moving, early after the meeting of the House, for the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the cause of the disputes between the cotton manufacturers and their servants. He should have moved for such Committee, previous to the recess, had it not been for the absence of several gentlemen, whom he wished to be present when the subject was brought forward. He also intended to move for a Committee to inquire what difference there was between spirits distilled from malt produced from barley grown in England, and spirits distilled from barley grown in Scotland.—The order of the day for receiving the Report of the Committee of Supply was deferred till Monday.—The Committees of Supply and Ways and Means were postponed till Monday.—Adjourned till Monday.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, December 16.

[MINUTES.]—Counsel were further heard, and at considerable length, relative to the Appeal, *Keighley v. the East India Company*, namely, Mr. Mansfield in continuation for the respondents. The farther hearing was postponed till Monday.—An officer from the Bank of England, presented at the bar, an account of the number, and amount of Bank Notes in circulation, on the 25th day of each month, from February till November 1803, pursuant to a motion of Lord King. Ordered to lie on the table.

[VOLUNTEER EXEMPTION BILL.]—Upon the motion of Lord Hawkesbury for the second reading of the Volunteer Exemption Bill,

The Earl of Suffolk, in pursuance of the
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intimation he had given on a former evening, took the opportunity to deliver his sentiments with respect to topics of which the bill in question formed a part. He professed himself the friend of the volunteer system, which, he thought, well regulated and applied, might be rendered of the most essential service to the country. It was not his intention to oppose the present measure. The volunteer force was a great and desirable accession to the defence of the country, and what he had to trouble their lordships with, should principally regard the application of such a force. He begged the attention of their lordships to some circumstances connected with a corps formed in that part of the country where he resided, and composed chiefly of his own tenants: these consisted of about 300 men. From the rank he had the honour to hold in his Majesty's service, he could not be appointed to the command of the corps himself, but the lord lieutenant of the county had the goodness to appoint his son to that station. He, however, materially assisted in the drilling and disciplining of the corps; indeed he had or could obtain no other assistance in the business than that of a serjeant of marines and a corporal; they were drilled, he believed, about eighteen times before they were inspected; and the state of discipline and order to which they had attained at that period, was hardly to be credited; they were, upon the whole, as *finè* a body of men as he would desire to see, and really believed he should as soon undertake to lead them against the enemy, as the brigade of guards which he had the honour to command in America, and which had so greatly signalized themselves in that country, under Lord Cornwallis and other officers. He was of opinion the volunteers might be rendered of the most essential service; but every thing should be done to conciliate them, and to keep up that military spirit and ardour with which, in general, they seemed actuated. Singular as it may appear, it was yet in the conviction of every man skilled in military tactics, that soldiers particularly that description of them which composed the volunteers of this country, may be over-disciplined; and it were obviously better to lead men rather *minus* in that respect, than in the least under the influence of discontent. The enthusiasm of that part of the national force should be flattered as much as possible; they should be as little harassed or fatigued as possible, and, above all, except in cases of direct necessity, care should be taken not to detach them from their homes and families: many of them were in such circumstances, that were they

taken from their families and occupations, the former must become parochially chargeable: the poor's rates were severely felt at present, especially by the land-holders, and he alluded to the ill consequences which might possibly ensue in the event of their being materially increased. He was confident that on the occasion of actual service, the volunteers would feel an emulation to equal, at least, if not excel, either the militia or the troops of the line, indeed, all these different descriptions of the national force, would feel a laudable spirit of rivalry and emulation, which might be directed in a way to prove highly serviceable. Speaking of the system of discipline which he thought it would be proper to apply to the volunteers, the noble earl expressed his disapprobation of the plan of having majors attached to them; those probably would be inclined to assimilate the volunteers to the military system of discipline, in too great a degree, and possibly may conduct themselves in other respects in a way not agreeable to the members of volunteer corps. Another consideration, and not an immaterial one, as considering the present contest likely to be protracted, militated against such a plan, namely, that of economy: the regulation alluded to, would certainly involve a considerable expense, but there was a certain description of regular assistance which he thought the volunteers stood in need of, namely, the assistance of adjutants properly qualified, and as still more indispensable, the assistance of serjeant-majors, and these regulations would, comparatively, be attended with no great expense. He had the highest expectations from the volunteers, and it was to be remembered, that at the commencement of the French military operations, they were more indebted to the exertions of their volunteers than even to the troops of the line, and infinitely more so than to the services of those conscripts who were dragged into action.—His lordship then proceeded to take a general view of a defensive system, with a reference to the event of invasion. One of the things which first struck him as most proper to be done, was the establishment of a great military *dépôt* in a central part of the kingdom; considering its local situation, and geographical circumstances, he considered Warwickshire as the fittest county for such an establishment: from this county, stores, &c., may be forwarded towards different parts of the coast, as occasion may require. Near to this *dépôt*, a great rendezvous of troops may be also established, and which may be periodically changed. Their lordships would recollect that such a *dépôt* as he had in his

contemplation, was long since, and most judiciously, established in the centre of Ireland, namely, in the town of Athlone. He would by no means recommend that military dépôts should be established on the coasts, or nearer to them than the distance of a forced march, or thirty miles. What would be the consequence if the enemy took possession of a military dépôt? They would find themselves at once provided with every thing necessary, and, more especially, with several important articles, it was impossible they could bring with them. He then proceeded to recommend the erection at proper stations on the coasts, of Martello forts. These would be found of inconceivable service in repelling the enemy; the expense of erecting them would not be great, they were of a circular form, with a roof nearly flat, or but little sloped, and formed so as to be bomb-proof. In them a piece of ordnance was transversely fixed, and so as to move round, and capable of being pointed in any direction; the resistance those erections were capable of was exemplified in an affair which took place on the coast of Corsica last war. One of these was attacked by a ship of the line (he believed it was the *Terrible*) commanded by Captain Young; and which was assisted by a 40 gun ship; in the course of a spirited conflict, the *Terrible* was more than once set on fire, as red-hot balls were discharged from the tower. The result was, that both vessels were beat off, and our troops were afterwards obliged regularly to open trenches against the tower before it surrendered. His lordship was proceeding to animadvert upon other topics connected with the defence of the country, when he was called to order by

Lord *Hobart*, who begged leave to remind the noble earl and the House, that the subject regularly under consideration was, whether a bill, to explain and amend two acts passed in the 42d and 43d year of the King, relating to volunteer corps, should be read a second time. It was in the judgment of their lordships how far a great part of what had fallen from the noble earl was relevant to such a consideration.

The *Earl of Suffolk* proceeded—he should endeavour to avoid any matter which may be considered as disorderly, as far as possible:—he continued to expatiate upon such topics as he conceived to be, in some degree, connected with the subject before the House; and, adverting to the state of Ireland, he observed, that he had lately received a letter from a particular friend of his, an officer of great professional merit, and who was a district general in that part of the united king-

dom. He alluded to Sir Eyre Coote; the letter was of a very consolatory description; the officer in question had traversed 500 miles of that country, and the description which he gave, he was sure, would be very satisfactory to several noble lords who heard him. He begged he might be allowed to read the letter as part of his speech.

Lord *Hawkesbury* rose to order. He felt it incumbent on him to interpose on such an occasion, and to advert to the obvious impropriety of suffering the communications of a general officer commanding a district, stating what his private opinions were on topics of so much delicacy and importance, to be so promulgated. Whether the communication was of a favourable or a disadvantageous nature mattered not, in his view of such a proceeding: the practice he thought was highly improper, and were it suffered to prevail, it might be recurred to in cases where the intelligence was of an opposite description. Adverting to the irregularity of what fell from the noble earl in point of order, he followed the example of his noble friend, in stating to their lordships what was the precise question before them.

The *Earl of Suffolk* again rose, and after observing that he stood corrected, proceeded to observe upon certain proceedings which illustrated the professional abilities of his hon. friend, the general officer in question. He particularly adverted to some circumstances connected with the taking or the evacuation of Alexandria, when

The *Lord Chancellor* quitted the woolsack, and deemed it incumbent on him to interpose respecting the question of order. It was with pain that he felt himself called upon so to interrupt the noble earl, a great deal of what fell from whom might, he thought, be better heard in other places.—His lordship then put the question upon the bill, when

Lord *Grenville* rose, and spoke nearly as follows:—It is not my intention, my lords, to take this opportunity of entering fully into the general system of regulations relating to the volunteers, and the defence of the country, which, from the nature of this bill, I might very fairly do. I mean to confine myself wholly to that particular point more immediately before the House. I shall very early after the recess take an opportunity of discussing more at large a great many points respecting the volunteer system, which I consider as a subject of the last importance. Although, my lords, my objections go in some measure to the frame of the bill, yet I do not wish to object to it altogether, as the delay which the bringing forward a new

bill would occasion, might detain the House for several days, merely for that particular subject. One can only regret, that a bill of so much importance should have been brought into the House at so late a period, that it cannot conveniently be deliberately considered, nor fully discussed. This bill, my lords, goes only to explain two acts of the last session of Parliament relative to the exemptions to be granted to the volunteers; but even this, in my opinion, is insufficiently done by it. The better plan would have been, to have repealed the provisions of the two former acts with regard to exemptions altogether, and to mould the whole into a new bill. For in what situation are we placed by these acts, and this bill of explanation? We impose a task of no little difficulty upon the lord lieutenants, deputy lieutenants, and on the volunteers themselves by rendering it necessary for them to search into three acts, doubtful in the meaning, if not contradictory. If however, notwithstanding this, your lordships should resolve to pass this bill, I trust you will allow me to make one or two observations upon the particulars of the bill which I cannot now properly make in the Committee. One of the acts imposes a difficulty which I have felt by experience. The number of days for attendance at drill in order to exempt a volunteer from the militia and army of reserve are different; I am sure, I know not why. For exemption from the militia, five days attendance is required, and for exemption from the army of reserve twenty-four days. In one part of the act, the commanding officer is ordered, in making the return of his troops, to declare upon his honour, that he has only returned those who, by having attended five days' drill, are exempted from the militia. In another part, he is commanded to give in a return of the whole force under his command, stating those who are entitled to exemption and those who are not. It is utterly impossible that both these provisions can be complied with; I myself was forced to give in a certificate differently worded from that required by the act of Parliament, and others must have done the same, leaving it to the discretion of the lord lieutenants, whether they would accept of them or not. But there is another dilemma to which the commanding officer is reduced. He is ordered in one place to make a return, declaring upon his honour which of those included are intitled to exemptions from the army of reserve and the militia, and which are not. Only one of two choices are here left; but it often happens that many are, he different number of days required,

exempt from the militia, and are not exempt from the army of reserve. The commanding officer cannot properly, therefore, comply with the act in his certificates, and is compelled to give one in a different form from what the act requires. But further; these acts contradict the 42d of the King, which says, that if a volunteer be drawn for the militia, he shall be recorded as drawn, and exempted only as long as he is a volunteer. The moment he leaves the service, he is called into the militia by the former ballot, and obliged to serve as a supernumerary to fill up the first vacancy that occurs. Now, in the late defence acts, this point is materially changed; for as it stands at present, the ballot does not hang over the heads of the volunteers, but any one who is a volunteer on the day of ballot is entitled to exemption for eleven months and 30 days, or the whole year, except one day; so that though he leaves his corps the moment after his exemption is admitted, he escapes for the subsequent 12 months. What, therefore, I would recommend is, in some measure to new model this bill, which, I believe, may be done in the Committee, so as to apply a distinct and efficient remedy to all these inconveniences. With regard to the volunteers themselves, it is a system of defence which has my highest approbation. I do think that it is a force peculiarly well calculated for this country. I do not mean to say that it ever ought to supersede the regular army; such a system never can be expected to supply the want of a regular force. But as an aid to the regular army, I am fully persuaded that they will be of the most essential advantage; nay more, that in this capacity they will perform services which a regular army could never execute. But the system requires much amendment, and while I declare my approbation of it in general, I cannot but reprobate many of the regulations that prevail among a great part of the volunteer corps. Their government by Committees, in my opinion, ought not to be tolerated, nor their election of their own officers. If these things be permitted to go on, although the evils have not yet been perceived; if Committees and General Meetings be to assemble for the purpose of debating, the same dreadful consequences may, some time, be apprehended, that the volunteers produced in France. This, however, is not the time for entering fully into that topic; but, at an early period of the recess, I shall think it my duty to draw the attention of the House to the subject, unless it comes from another quarter; as I think it a matter of the last im-

portance, that many improvements should he made in the provisions relating to the volunteer system.

Lord *Hobart* spoke shortly in answer to what had fallen from the noble lord. With respect to the general subject, he need scarcely observe, it was in the serious consideration of his Majesty's government, and every practicable opportunity would be taken to ameliorate the volunteer system, and to render that part of the national force as efficacious as possible. With respect to the difficulties upon which so much stress had been laid by the noble lord, they certainly appeared to him in a very different light, and he contended, that the bill before the House, as far as it applied, went to obviate them—it went to settle the important point of the exemptions. With respect to the returns, no contradictory consideration appeared to him in the mode chalked out for those proceedings, and although the officer whose duty it was to make the returns alluded to, might possibly not be a perfect master of the provisions of the regulating acts, yet, he may easily obtain the necessary degree of information. He could by no means permit the noble lord's position, that the present was such an advanced period of the session, as to render a thorough investigation of the subject impracticable. With a reference to the ensuing recess, which would cause a temporary separation of their lordships, such an observation to a certain extent, did apply, yet the session would subsequently be sufficiently long for every purpose adverted to; and he had also to observe, that the present bill, as indeed every measure of the kind should, contained a provision authorizing its alteration or repeal in the course of the present session.

Lord *Romney* observed, that he approved highly of the volunteer system, but suggested that a force of this kind, pervading the whole country, and intended to act together, ought to be put upon the same footing. As it stood at present, some were to exercise only 20 days, others 34, and so on. This might create jealousies and ill humour, which ought to be avoided. He thought also the exemptions should be granted without reference to the time of the corps being accepted; as they were by no means accepted in the order of their applications. This might arise from letters being mislaid, or some casualty, such as occasionally occurs in a press of business. He concurred with his noble relation (Lord Grenville) in his opinions with respect to the regulations of many corps of volunteers, and the unmilitary manner in which they were governed.

He had listened to him on that point with the greatest admiration. He also disliked their Committees and their Sub-Committees, and much as he was attached to the volunteer system, he would rather choose that every man of them should be disbanded, than that they should be permitted to continue under such unmilitary regulations. If, said his lordship, these committees are suffered to exist, I have no hesitation to say, that the Monarchy is not safe for six months.

Lord *Hobart*, in reply to the noble lord who spoke last, said, that the non-acceptance of the volunteers in the order of their applications, arose from the unexpected press of offers, which made government unwilling to act, except upon some general system.

Earl *Darnley* said, that although this bill was extremely imperfect, he rejoiced that even so much was done with regard to the volunteers. The system would still require a great deal of improvement. He approved highly the idea that had been thrown out in another place, with regard to the appointment of field officers and adjutants to the different corps, which, as they were to be exempted, ought to be rendered as efficient as possible.—He alluded to a query he had put to the noble Secretary of State, relative to the intention of his Majesty's ministers with respect to volunteer regulations previous to the recess; though these, as in the instance of the bill before the House, had fallen short of what he was convinced was necessary to be done, yet he was happy to hear it authoritatively stated that the general subject, and which was one of the last importance, was seriously in the consideration of his Majesty's government. He perfectly agreed with every word that the noble lord (Grenville) had said with regard to the regulations, committees, and unmilitary government of many of the volunteer corps, and thought it was necessary that this should be immediately corrected.

Lord *Hanckesbury* observed, that the noble earl had certainly put the query to him which he had alluded to, but it would be in his recollection, that it referred to a general and comprehensive system of regulation, to which he had truly replied that he knew of no intention on the part of ministers to bring forward any measures on that broad principle previous to the recess. The present was obviously a bill of an explanatory nature, and went to several points, on which speedy legislative interference was necessary, and in his mind, it went fully to obviate those difficulties it professed to remove. Much had been said, and truly, of the vast importance of the subject, and the necessity of farther regulations, but then the House would

be aware, that it was one of an extensive and complicated, as well as of an important nature. To a certain degree the principle was new; already had the volunteers been rendered more efficacious than those which had existed in the late war; the system in the present case must be gradually ameliorated, and in the course of time rendered still more efficacious, and less exceptionable. The original principle on which the force was created and the services of its members accepted of, should not at the same time be lost sight of. The volunteer system was also to be regarded in a certain view, which, under the consideration of the contest in which we were engaged being a protracted one, was one of considerable importance, namely, economy. At the first glance it would appear, that the services of the volunteers were to be acquired incalculably cheaper than those of any other description of the national force. The consideration of the volunteer system, was not only to a certain degree, a novel one, but it proceeded on distinct principles: on its own peculiar nature and merits, then, was that system to be considered. On these principles it was regarded by his Majesty's government, who, he repeated, certainly contemplated the subject with the most serious attention.

The *Duke of Clarence* then rose, and observed, that he entirely concurred in the sentiments of the noble lord whom he had in his eye (*Grenville*), with regard to the volunteers. He approved the system, but was satisfied, that it required a great deal of improvement. He did not intend at present to enter freely into the question; as after what the noble lord opposite (*Hawkesbury*) had said, with respect to the intentions of government, any long discussion now was totally useless. And, indeed, it must be apparent, that till the imperfections that no doubt prevailed in the system of the volunteers were ready to be corrected, the less that was said about the matter the better. He would therefore take his own advice and instantly sit down.—The question was then put; the bill was read a second time, and ordered to be committed to-morrow, after which their Lordships immediately adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,
Saturday December 17.

[*MINUTES.*]—The Duke of Norfolk, agreeably to his former intimation, presented a bill for exempting Rectors, Vicars, and perpetual Curates from Arrest for Debt or Damages in any Civil Process within the Limits of their respective Parishes, which was read a first time. His grace then said, he was conscious that some difficulty must

attend the adoption of the present measure. The preamble of the bill recited several acts which he should have deemed presumption in him to refer to, being altogether unacquainted with ecclesiastical law, had he not received the assistance and advice of a gentleman eminently skilled in that subject (*Sir W. Scott*). He was happy to think, that that learned person entertained so favourable an opinion of the present measure, that he himself would have introduced it before this time, had not the difficulties alluded to presented themselves. Such, his grace entertained sanguine hopes, might be done away. With this view he had introduced the bill at the present moment. He therefore moved, that it should be printed, that their lordships might have an opportunity of giving it deliberate consideration during the recess.—The bill was accordingly ordered to be printed.—The Volunteer Explanatory Bill went through a Committee. On the report being brought up; the Lord Chancellor proposed some verbal amendments, chiefly with a view to remove the objections stated by Lord Grenville on a former night, and to declare that volunteers should not, in every case, be free from ballot for the militia or army of reserve for twelve months after the return of the commanding officer, certifying, that they had served the stipulated number of days; but that they should become liable to such ballots, the moment they actually ceased to serve in any volunteer corps.—The amendments were agreed to and the bill ordered to be read a third time on Tuesday.—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,
Monday, December 19.

[*MINUTES.*]—Counsel were heard at considerable length in continuation relative to the Appeal from Chancery; *Keighley v. the East India Company*, viz., *Mr. Adam*, as second counsel for the respondents. Their Lordships postponed the final hearing till to-morrow.

[*VOLUNTEER EXEMPTION BILL.*]—On the question being put for the third reading of the Volunteer Exemption Bill, a conversation of some length arose, which was opened by *Earl Fitzwilliam*, who entered into the general subject in some degree of detail. In the course of his observations, his lordship made a variety of remarks upon certain provisions in the existing acts upon the subject, particularly upon the 42d and 43d of his Majesty, and also upon the act of the 33d. He expatiated upon the principle on which the volunteers had originally tendered their services, and the terms upon which they were accepted, and which he seemed to

contrast with the system which had subsequently been adopted for their regulation: from the tone and direction of the noble earl's voice, we were precluded from hearing many of his observations; but he argued that the entire system required, and speedily, a considerable degree of revision: doubts had arisen, and difficulties were daily experienced, which required legislative interference for their explanation and removal. Many of the provisions to which he had referred, were inconsistent with the principle upon which the volunteers originally came forward, and, from his view of certain parts of the acts, he deemed it matter for consideration, how far, in certain cases, the volunteers were or were not subject to particular provisions of the martial law. These were points which required the most serious consideration. With respect to the point of exemption, the bill, he seemed to think, was neither sufficiently efficacious, nor did it extend far enough: there were several doubts and difficulties which it would not tend to remove; and he remarked upon what he conceived to be the hurried progress of the bill through the House. He therefore, in order to afford an opportunity of considering the introduction of some farther provisions to obviate the difficulties to which he had alluded, would propose that the bill be recommitted. The noble earl concluded by moving accord-

Lord *Hawkesbury*, in answer to several points which had fallen from the noble earl, observed, that he regretted his absence from the House for some days past, as then he would be sensible how little ground existed for the charge of precipitation against ministers in the progress of the bill through the House; and especially his absence from the Committee on the bill last Saturday, a stage in which many of the noble earl's observations would more regularly apply. The bill was introduced into that House on Thursday, read a second time on Friday, when some discussion of the measure took place, committed on Saturday, and lay over for a third reading this day. The bill before the House was merely of an explanatory nature, and very limited in its operation; it tended to do away certain practical difficulties, for which an immediate legislative interposition was obviously necessary. These principally related, as appeared by the bill, to certain points of exemption. With respect to the general subject, relative to which a great deal of what had fallen from the noble earl applied, he repeated what he had said on former occasions, that it was certainly in the serious consideration of his

Majesty's government, and they were fully aware of what could be advanced on the grounds of revising and ameliorating the volunteer system, but its extensive and complicated nature was at the same time to be considered; however, it was intended that no practicable opportunity of doing that which was on all hands deemed so desirable and important, should be omitted on the part of ministers. At the same time, though he threw out these observations, he wished to be understood as not pledging himself to the production of any specific measure at any particular time.—Recurring again to some of the noble earl's detailed observations, he admitted, to a certain degree, some doubts and difficulties had arisen with respect to certain provisions of the relevant acts, and respecting which, the most regular authorities, at the time, were resorted to, namely, the law officers of the crown; on opinions promulgated by these, the magistrates acted. With respect to the bill, he deemed its provisions fully adequate to obviate those difficulties it professed to remove; and it was such as, under all the circumstances of the case, it was deemed necessary to propose to the legislature; but with regard to any contingent difficulties which might prevail (or such as seemed to be in the mind of the noble earl) until it should please Parliament to adopt farther regulations, if such in its wisdom it should deem necessary, that regular quarter which he had alluded to as arbitrating on former occasions, would be again resorted to, for the direction of the magistrates, &c., in the discharge of their duties; he would, therefore, press the third reading of the bill.

Earl *Fitzwilliam*, in explanation, supported some of the provisions he had in the first instance advanced. He did not think that magistrates were entitled to act in virtue of an opinion delivered by the law officers of the Crown. He apprehended that they could only act agreeably to act of Parliament; and that where any act was inexplicable, they were not entitled to supply its defects by the opinions of any lawyers, however respectable. If it was meant that the exemptions should extend to volunteers of every description, very few would remain subject to the ballots for the militia and army of reserve; and he thought it of importance that one mode should not be adopted in one parish and another in another. He adverted to the state of the ballots, &c., in the parts of the country where he was connected. These were, in consequence of the difficulties which occurred, in some instances delayed; and the lieutenantancy felt themselves

considerably at a loss. He conceived it to be the duty of ministers to lose no time in obviating those difficulties.

Lord *Grantley* said a few words in support of what fell from the noble Secretary of State, and adverted to the necessity which existed for the explanatory bill then under consideration.

The *Lord Chancellor* argued, that nothing which fell from the noble earl, militated against the passing of the bill then before the House. The greater part of what his lordship had advanced, went to points which had no connexion whatever with the bill, which was of an explanatory and a very limited nature. He was free to confess his disapprobation, in certain points of view, of proceedings of this kind: he liked not explanatory act after explanatory act, and exposition after exposition. These considerations should be left, as far as possible, to the construction and explanation of those in whose province it was regularly to explain them; he alluded principally to his Majesty's law officers. With respect to the measure regularly under consideration, the noble and learned lord coincided with, and enforced what had fallen from the noble Secretary of State.

Earl *Fitzwilliam*, in additional explanation, observed, that his object was not to resist the progress of the bill; as far as it went, he rather approved of it: but he considered it as by no means sufficiently efficacious or extensive, and in that view, he thought it susceptible of amendment.

The *Lord Chancellor* then put the question, and after a few words between him and the noble earl, respecting the point of order on that proceeding, the bill was read a third time, and passed; and a message was immediately sent to the Commons, acquainting them, that their Lordships had agreed to the bill, with certain amendments.—Their lordships, then, after disposing of some routine business, adjourned during pleasure.—After a short interval, Mr. Sargent, accompanied by several members, returned the Volunteer Corps Regulation Bill from the Commons, who had agreed to their Lordships' amendments.—This being notified to the House, an adjournment till to-morrow immediately took place.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, December 19.

[*MINUTES.*]—Colonel Barton, from the office of the Inspector General of the army of reserve, brought up the general return of the number of men raised for the

royal army of reserve up to the present month of December. Ordered to be printed.—Mr. Parr, from the African Company, presented some accounts from that company. Ordered to lie on the table.—Mr. Dent presented a petition from the prisoners confined for debt in Lancaster Gaol, praying for relief.—Colonel Stanley and Mr. Tierney presented similar petitions from the prisoners confined for debt in Chester Gaol, and in the Fleet. Ordered to lie on the table.—A new writ was ordered for the borough of Caermarthen, in the room of J. G. Philips, Esq. who has accepted the Chiltern Hundreds.—A person from the Excise, brought up an account of the quantity of table beer and small beer, which had paid duty from January, 1802, to January, 1803.—The report of the Committee of Supply, respecting the sum granted for the encouragement of the linen manufactures in Ireland, was brought up and agreed to.

[*IRISH IMPORT DUTIES BILL.*]—Mr. *Corry* said, he rose for the purpose of giving a notice relative to the Ways and Means of Ireland. It was not usual to go into the Ways and Means of Ireland, previous to the Christmas recess, he, therefore, now only wished to give notice of his intention upon that subject, and the rather, because the military duties of many of the Irish members rendered it impossible for them at present to attend their duty in Parliament. The notice he now gave, related to the consolidation of the subsisting import duties, and some of the inland duties in Ireland. A schedule of those duties had been laid before Parliament last session, and was agreed to, but certain considerations, particularly a wish to give the fullest possible time to merchants for the investigation of the subject, induced the postponement of further proceedings upon it. A similar schedule would be laid before Parliament after the recess. He hoped the House would excuse him for being thus special in his notice, because he was anxious that it should be well understood in Ireland, particularly by the merchants. The duties referred to, were principally upon foreign articles, either imported directly into Ireland, or through Great Britain; but in consequence of the stipulations in the Act of Union, not upon any articles, the produce of Great Britain. The duties now payable on foreign articles were principally those under the 40th Geo. III. cap. 4, the 41st Geo. III. cap. 33, which had since been continued, and the 42d Geo. III. cap. 117. But the consolidation was not to be made strictly and precisely upon the duties as they now stood, because in all cases where there

were fractions of a penny, the fraction would be rejected, and the duty brought to the next integer either above or below. In the former case, the revenue would be increased a little; and, in the latter case, it would be diminished a little. In some cases, certain duties imposed by 42 Geo. III. cap. 117, of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on imports, and 1 or $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on exports, would be extended by this schedule to East-India goods. The drawbacks now allowed on the export of foreign articles to foreign countries were those under the acts of the 40th and 41st Geo. III. the duties under the 42d Geo. III. cap. 117, not now drawn back, were by the schedule as voted, drawn back. He had but one more remark to trouble the House with; by the 40th Geo. III. passed in the last session of the Irish Parliament, the duties were laid upon most articles *ad valorem*, and the additional duty imposed by the 42d Geo. III. cap. 117, was a rated duty, or the reverse, which of course caused considerable trouble to the merchants, for whose accommodation, and in order to facilitate business, it would now be proposed, that the duties under these acts should be reduced to one and the same denomination, *viz.* either a rated duty or an *ad valorem* duty, according to the nature of the article. The schedule, which he should propose after the recess, would almost in every instance be the same as that of last session, yet he wished to be distinctly understood, that it might vary from it; because, where alterations were suggested, either by the merchants themselves or by others, the good sense of which was apparent, they would undoubtedly be attended to. In the course of the last session of Parliament, he had given notice that he should prepare, for the consideration of Parliament, a measure in the shape of a property tax for Ireland; he did not mean at present to make any observation upon that subject, except to say that he should endeavour to prepare a measure of that sort, and to submit it to Parliament soon after the recess. He had only further to add, that he should propose that the duties should be permanent, in order to meet the permanent charges of Ireland, and not annual, as they had been up to the present time.

[*VOLUNTEER EXEMPTION BILL.*]—A message from the Lords, informed the House, their lordships had agreed to the Volunteer Exemption Amendment Bill, with several amendments, to which they desired the concurrence of the House.—Mr. Secretary Yorke moved, that the amendments be now read.—The first amendment being accordingly read,

Mr. *Secretary Yorke* said, that on the reading of the bill and the amendment, it would strike any one that this amendment was necessary; for the bill, as it went from the House up to the other House of Parliament, exempted persons accepted and enrolled as volunteers from serving in the militia, but had no provision on being ballotted to serve in the militia before they became volunteers, and this amendment was therefore necessary, in order that persons who had been ballotted for the militia, should be obliged to do so, if they should happen to quit their volunteer corps; that they should claim no exemption, on account of having been volunteers, but that such exemptions should continue only while they remained volunteers, for which reason he trusted the House would have no objection to the amendment.

The *Speaker* observed, upon the point of order, that the usual course was to read all the amendments over once, before any discussion took place upon them, and that the season for observation was, regularly speaking, on the question of second reading, or of agreeing to the amendments. This was the more necessary to be observed, because by it the House could see the bearing of the amendments altogether, before it entertained any discussion upon them.—The amendments were then read; they were all verbal except the first, of which the substance is already stated.—On the question for the second reading,

Mr. *Windham* took an objection to the House, at present, in this matter. He said, it was usual to adjourn the consideration of all amendments made by the Lords, in any bill sent to them from that House, in order to give the members time to understand it. He did not profess to understand this amendment, thus brought down and read upon the sudden. He saw no harm in postponing the consideration of it for twenty-four hours. He said, that an idea had gone abroad, whether true or not, he did not pretend to say, that the amendments made by the lords in this bill, were such as the House had not been accustomed to receive and acquiesce in. He dared to say, that was not likely to be the case upon such an occasion as this, but that was a point, however well assured, it was impossible for the House to know; for which reason, he thought this subject ought to stand over until to-morrow; this he pressed the more particularly, as many gentlemen had gone away under an idea that this bill would not have been brought from the House of Lords to-night; and that if these amendments were now agreed to, these gen-

tlemen would be deprived of the opportunity of delivering their sentiments upon them.

Mr. *Secretary Yorkes* said that if he thought there was any amendment which required much consideration, he should wish it to be deferred, to give every gentleman who wished it, an opportunity of delivering his sentiments upon it, but there really was nothing of that kind. It certainly was not difficult to understand the first amendment, as he had already stated it; and, as to all the rest, they were merely verbal. With regard to the idea of the amendments being material, and of its having so gone forth to the public, that was one of the inconveniences which resulted from permitting the publication of the proceedings of Parliament; under which, some persons had the audacity, in direct defiance of the standing orders of the House, not only to misrepresent the proceedings of the two Houses of Parliament, but sometimes actually to invent matter, which created great confusion in the public mind. A clause was proposed by a noble lord in the other House of Parliament, by way of amendment to the bill, which amendment was now before the House, and which went only to make up for an oversight of the House of Commons, by which it was provided, that if any volunteer should quit his corps, he should no longer be allowed to avail himself of the exemptions to which volunteers were entitled; that was all—a thing too plain for discussion.

Mr. *Calcraft* professed to have no wish to procrastinate this business, but he could not help thinking it was quite necessary that this amendment should be inquired into, which could not be done unless it was postponed until to-morrow at least. He was satisfied that a much more respectable attendance in point of numbers, would have taken place in the House if it had been thought that these amendments were to have been proposed to be agreed to to-night. He knew of no reason why the House might not take this matter into consideration to-morrow. He was quite sure none had been alleged.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that all those gentlemen who had heard the amendment and attended to the bill, who thought that it only went to supply the defect of that bill as it went from that House, would agree to the amendment. But if any gentleman in the House would have the goodness to attend to the amendment while it was read from the chair, and then would declare, as a member of that House, that he did not understand the amendment perfectly, not only would it be matter of jus-

tice to allow further time to consider it, and therefore he should not oppose it, but he should himself move for further time for that purpose.

Lord *Folkestone* observed, that several gentlemen who, he believed, intended to be present at the discussion of these amendments, had gone away under an impression that these amendments were not to be proposed to be agreed to until to-morrow. His lordship said, he understood it to be the general practice of that House not to take amendments made by the lords into consideration until the next day after they were brought down.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* desired the Speaker to read, first the bill as it went up to the House of Lords, and then the amendment made by their lordships, which being done,

The *Speaker* took leave to observe, that although sometimes amendments made by the lords were taken into consideration on a subsequent day, yet it was extremely frequent for the House to agree to amendments made by the lords on the same day they were brought down. One of the amendments had been already explained; as to the rest, they were merely verbal. It was for the House to say whether it would consider them now, or defer them to a future day.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that the substantial amendment now before the House was only to carry into effect the manifest intention of the House, but which intention had been imperfectly expressed. Here he went over the clause again, and observed, that the bill as it originally stood, only affected volunteers who should be balloted, &c. but did not provide for the case of those who might have been balloted and exempted on account of being volunteers, but who ought not to have such exemptions longer than they should serve as volunteers.

Mr. *Windham* said, that the importance of the subject was unquestionable. The propriety of adjourning the discussion of it was to him obvious. He professed himself incapable of understanding this amendment on the sudden, at least of being sure he understood it. Gentlemen had gone away under the idea that it was not to be discussed to-night, and he thought it was little more than matter of course to defer it until to-morrow. He was really ignorant of the possible effect of certain words being introduced into a bill like this, and his ignorance strengthened his argument in this case, for it was impossible without time to remove

it. There was no necessity of thus going backwards and forwards in a hurry with bills: and therefore on these grounds, with every reason for the adjournment, and none against it, he should think the House would not proceed on this matter now.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that by the word substantial amendment, he did not mean that which the right hon. gent. who spoke last, might suppose; he meant it only by way of distinction from those amendments which were merely verbal.

Mr. *Giles* said, he considered the bill as now amended by the lords, to be precisely what the House intended it to be when they passed it, but from an oversight had omitted to express with precision, for which reason he supported the amendment, and saw no reason for delaying the consideration of it.

Mr. *Galcraft* adhered to his former opinion upon this subject, on account of gentlemen having left the House under an idea that the subject was not to be discussed to-night. As to the amendment being only what the House intended to have expressed, he did not think it much to the credit of the House, to have sent into the other House a bill which did not express what was meant by its authors—an additional reason for not being so hasty a second time. He alleged that the House would have done more wisely by printing the bill, and giving more time for its discussion than it had done. The lords had ordered it to be printed, and wisely so, for such measures should have as ample a discussion as possible. In one word, unless some better reason than any he had yet heard, was given for agreeing to these amendments to-night, he should think it his duty to object to that course.

An adjournment was moved by Lord *Folkestone*, as the bill had not been printed, that members might have an opportunity of seeing with more certainty what was the effect of the different amendments.—The gallery was then cleared; but we understand that his lordship was prevailed upon to withdraw his motion. The amendments were then read and agreed to; the bill was returned to the Lords, and the House adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, Dec. 20.

[*MINUTES.*]—Mr. *Romilly* was heard on the part of the appellant, in the cause of *Keighley v. the East India Company*, after which the Lord Chancellor at some length delivered his sentiments respecting the case.

His lordship was of opinion, that before their lordships came to a decision, some time should be allowed for making up their minds on so important a case to the parties concerned. Their lordships being to adjourn for the recess this night, he should move that the further proceedings be adjourned to the second day of the meeting of Parliament after the recess. Ordered.—Mr. *Mitford* presented an account of the expense of the northern lights, the southern whale fishery, and some other accounts, which were laid on the table.—A message was sent to the honourable House of Commons by Sir *Francis Molyneux*, gentleman usher of the Black Rod, acquainting them, that the lords, authorised by virtue of his Majesty's commission for declaring his royal assent to several acts agreed upon by both Houses, desired the immediate attendance of the honourable House in the House of Peers to hear the commission read; and the Commons being come thither, the said commission, empowering the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord High Chancellor of Great-Britain, and several other lords therein named, to declare and notify the royal assent to the said acts, was read accordingly; and the royal assent given to, An act to explain and amend two acts passed in the forty-second and forty-third years of the reign of his present Majesty, relating to volunteers and yeomanry corps in Great Britain; and also one private act.—The House then adjourned to Friday the 3d day of February, 1804.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, Dec. 20.

[*MINUTES.*]—A message from the lords, required the attendance of the Speaker at the bar of that House, where the royal assent was given by commission to the volunteer exemption act.—Mr. *Mitford* presented an abstract of the account of the commissioners of northern light houses; also an account of the number of ships from Scotland engaged in the whale fishery. Ordered to lie on the table.—On the motion of Mr. *Sergeant*, a new writ was ordered to be issued for the election of a Burgess for the borough of Dorchester in the room of the hon. *Cropley Ashley*, who has accepted the office of clerk of the deliveries in his Majesty's ordnance.—Mr. *Sheridan* presented a petition from certain electors of the borough of Liskeard, in Cornwall, complaining of the decision of the Committee appointed to try the merits of the last elec-

tion for that borough. The petition stated the right of voting vested in all the inhabitants of Liskeard paying scot and lot, although the Committee determined that it belonged solely to the mayor and burgesses, and accordingly decided that the honourable John and William Elliots, the sitting members, were duly elected; but in the opinion and judgment of petitioners, as Thomas Sheridan and William Ogilvie, Esqrs. had the majority of scot and lot voters, the said decision of the Committee was contrary to the law and usage of Liskeard. They, there-

fore, prayed permission to oppose the resolutions of the said Committee.—Another petition of a similar nature was presented by Mr. Sheridan, from a Mr. Child, of Liskeard. Both petitions were ordered to be taken into consideration on Tuesday, the 10th of April next.—Ordered, that the account presented by Mr. Vansittart on the 14th instant, relative to bounties given on fish brought to the London market, should be printed.—On the motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer the House adjourned on Wednesday the 1st of February 1804.

An Account of the NET PRODUCE of all the PERMANENT TAXES in the Years and Quarters ending the 10th day of October, 1802 and 1803, respectively.

	In the Quarters ended		In the Years ended	
	Oct. 10, 1802.	Oct. 10, 1803.	Oct. 10, 1802.	Oct. 10, 1803.
Customs£.	1,274,754 8 3	1,474,957 9 9½	2,345,461 18 11	3,857,400 18 2
Excise, Consolidated....	3,619,647 0 0	3,813,079 0 0	12,203,226 3 8	14,098,990 0 0
Stamps	760,444 0 0	816,747 1 6½	2,931,768 13 8	3,153,040 4 3
Incidental Duties	702,422 18 7	797,008 18 5½	4,539,540 18 0½	5,156,997 6 8
Duties raised in 1803, by means of a Consolidation of the Customs, by the Act of the 43d Geo. III.		62,500 0 0	— — —	62,500 0 0
Sugar, Malt, Tobacco, &c.	1,773,899 16 3¼	1,283,428 17 3¼	3,509,095 14 6¼	3,995,407 4 9
	8,131,168 3 1¼	8,245,718 7 1¼	25,199,093 14 0	30,192,335 3 9

WAR TAXES.			
British Spirits .....	.....	38,335 0 0	.....
Foreign Spirits .....	.....	120,505 0 0	.....
Wine .....	.....	57,886 0 0	.....
Goods and Shipping .....	.....	198,640 18 9	.....
Malt .....	.....	394 0 0	.....
Sweets .....	.....	132 0 0	.....
Tea .....	.....	215,813 0 0	.....
		£. 631,705 18 9½	£. 631,705 18 9½

Exchequer, November 28, 1803.

JAMES FISHER.

An Account of the Amount of the NOTES of the BANK OF IRELAND, in Circulation (including BANK POST BILLS payable after Seven Days Sight) on the 1st of January, April, August, and October, 1803, respectively; distinguishing the Amount of the several Descriptions of Notes below the Value of FIVE POUNDS.

Value of	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	Value of	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
£. 5. and upwards				1,624,401	4	8½	£. 5. and Upwards				1,806,194	1	6
£. 1.	141,403	0	0	999,351	11	4½	£. 1.	143,226	0	0	1,012,596	4	1½
1 Guinea..	541,208	17	0				1 Guinea..	542,976	10	6			
1 & ½....	311,597	1	7½				1 & ½....	314,422	12	7½			
3	5,142	12	9				3	11,971	1	0			
1803. January 1st	£.			2,623,752	16	1	1803. August 1st.....	£.			2,818,790	5	7
£. 5. and Upwards.....				1,642,254	14	7½	£. 5. and Upwards.....				1,769,950	9	11
£. 1.	139,748	0	0	1,017,696	1	10½	£. 1.	143,314	0	0	1,011,891	7	4½
1 Guinea..	538,911	2	0				1 Guinea..	544,992	3	6			
1 & ½....	314,391	18	4½				1 & ½....	312,661	15	7½			
3	24,645	1	6				3	10,923	8	3			
1803. April 1st.....	£.			2,659,950	16	6	1803. October 1st	£.			2,781,841	17	3½

For the Gov. and Comp. of the Bank of Ireland,

Dublin, 9th Dec. 1803.

Wm. Donlevy, Acct. Gen.

An Amount of the NOTES of the BANK OF ENGLAND, in Circulation on the 1st of June, 1st Aug. 1st Oct. and 25th Nov. 1803;—distinguishing the Amount of those that were below the Value of Five Pounds.

Amount of Bank of England Notes of Five Pounds each, and upwards, including Bank Post Bills payable Seven days after Sight.

On 1st June - - - - 1803, - - £12,847,540

1st August - - - 1803, - - - 13,013,180

1st October - - 1803, - - - 12,570,500

25th November 1803, - - - 13,502,690

Amount of Bank of England Notes of £2 and £1 each.

On 1st July - - - - 1803, - - - £3,253,600

1st August - - - 1803, - - - 3,721,330

1st October - - 1803, - - - 4,052,010

25th November 1803, - - - 4,429,240

Wm. Walton, Acct. Gen.

Bank of England, 2d Dec. 1803.

General Return of the Royal Army of Reserve; made up from the latest Returns received by the Inspector General.

Inspector General's Office, Dec. 1803.

SCOTLAND.

COUNTIES.

	No. of Men.	Rejected.	Dead.	Deserted.	Effective, and Present.	No. due, including Casualties.
Aberdeen	154	—	—	4	150	350
Argyl	76	—	—	6	70	203
Ayr	286	2	2	12	270	57
Banff	29	—	—	—	29	105
Berwick	94	2	1	16	75	41
Bute	3	—	—	—	3	43
Caithness	84	2	—	1	81	10
Clackmannan . . .	41	—	—	—	41	1
Cromarty	9	—	—	—	9	3
Dumharton	87	2	—	13	72	8
Dumfries	177	1	—	35	141	72
Edinburgh	358	16	—	33	303	180
Elgia	64	1	—	—	63	40
Fife	344	—	—	14	334	29
Forfar	293	2	—	2	289	94
Haddington	75	6	—	9	60	56
Inverness	122	—	—	—	122	166
Kincardine	70	—	—	4	66	36
Kinross	24	—	—	—	24	2
Kirkcudbright . . .	66	1	—	7	58	55
Lanark	509	—	—	21	488	75
Linlithgow	67	6	—	7	54	16
Nairn	21	—	—	2	19	13
Peebles	31	1	—	2	28	6
Perth	462	—	—	25	437	53
Renfrew	279	1	—	25	253	50
Ross	171	3	—	3	165	38
Roxburgh	100	5	—	6	89	45
Selkirk	19	—	—	—	19	—
Stirling	173	6	—	16	151	46
Sutherland	61	1	—	—	60	15
Wigtown	82	—	—	2	80	9
Total, for Scotland . .	4435	58	3	271	4103	1897

General Return of the Royal Army of Reserve for England and Wales.

ENGLAND and WALES. — COUNTIES.	No. of Men.	Rejected.	Dead.	Deserted.	Effective, and Present.	No. due, including Casualties.
Anglesea	45	2	—	2	41	68
Bedford	173	2	2	—	169	87
Buckingham . . .	348	9	3	13	323	112
Berks	392	32	5	36	319	124
Brecon	106	1	—	2	103	44
Cambridge	318	17	1	12	288	64
Cheshire	594	2	2	28	540	162
Cumberland	306	35	2	39	230	176
Cornwall	570	49	2	29	490	85
Cardigan	127	1	—	1	125	142
Carmarthen	230	2	3	2	223	25
Carnarvon	85	1	—	—	84	44
Durham	444	17	2	24	401	77
Devon	1216	69	4	10	1133	124
Dorset	332	2	3	3	324	61
Derby	587	4	—	53	530	84
Denbigh	130	8	—	—	122	104
Essex	819	31	19	77	692	287
Flint	83	2	—	1	80	55
Gloucester	675	3	3	7	662	114
Glamorgan	199	—	3	2	194	81
Hertford	307	13	4	18	272	129
Huntingdon	123	4	1	56	62	57
Hants	597	2	12	48	535	253
Hertford	418	4	2	68	344	76
Kent	1040	26	7	73	934	492
Lancaster	2303	82	2	53	2166	258
London and Middlesex } . . .	1376	28	4	84	1260	1883
Leicester	510	29	1	10	470	59
Lincoln	639	2	3	10	624	132
Merioneth	86	2	2	—	82	45
Monmouth	127	—	2	—	125	52
Montgomery	160	1	2	1	156	11
Northampton . . .	452	7	3	1	442	166
Norfolk	802	32	14	22	734	193
Northumberland . .	530	45	1	14	470	155
Nottingham	519	32	—	24	463	97
Oxford	337	27	1	6	303	121
Pembroke	177	1	—	10	166	2
Rutland	42	2	—	1	39	15
Radnor	53	1	—	—	52	22
Shropshire	571	40	13	12	506	286
Suffolk	713	53	26	12	622	245
Surrey	571	10	3	103	455	508
Sussex	371	2	5	19	345	276
Somerset	890	33	—	72	785	198
Stafford	745	1	—	3	741	170
Warwick	595	3	1	8	583	130
Worcester	565	4	1	14	546	42
Westmorland	166	—	2	6	158	22
Wilts	683	42	7	10	624	103
West Riding } . .	1844	113	3	28	1700	289
York { East Do. . . .	343	—	1	2	340	237
North Do.	304	—	1	—	303	149
Total for Eng- land and Wales } .	26739	952	178	1129	24480	9004

General Return of the Royal Army of Reserve for Ireland.

IRELAND.	No. of Men.	Rejected.	Dead.	Deserted.	Effective, and Present.	No. due, including Casualties.
COUNTIES.						
Antrim	245	No particular Return of men rejected at the Receiving Quarters has been made, in consequence of no Expense for Pay, &c. being incurred for such Men.	—	16	229	51
Armagh	241		—	21	220	60
Carlow	87		—	9	78	132
Cavan	203		—	23	180	30
Clare	44		—	1	43	167
Cork (City)	229		—	31	198	82
Do. (County)	310		—	19	291	279
Donegal	108		—	19	89	261
Down	375		—	16	359	66
Dublin (City)	283		—	28	255	25
Do. (County)	134		—	12	122	88
Fermanagh	189		—	9	180	30
Galway	166		—	11	155	195
Kerry	71		—	11	60	270
Kildare	130		—	22	108	102
Kilkenny	115		—	20	95	185
King's	206		—	7	199	81
Leitrim	111		—	14	97	113
Limerick (City)	110		—	6	104	176
Do. (County)	109		—	23	86	124
Londonderry	240		—	17	223	127
Longford	175		—	16	159	51
Louth	239		—	40	199	116
Mayo	349		—	42	307	193
Meath	206		—	31	175	105
Monaghan	240		—	18	222	58
Queen's	151		—	16	135	75
Roscommon	80		—	12	68	312
Sligo	207		—	8	199	11
Tipperary	181		—	39	142	208
Tyrone	313		—	21	292	58
Waterford	125		—	14	111	169
Westmeath	166		—	16	150	60
Wexford	17		—	2	15	335
Wicklow	34		—	—	34	176
Total for Ireland ..	6189	—	—	610	5579	4521

RECAPITULATION.

England & Wales	26739	952	178	1129	24480	9004
Scotland	4435	58	3	271	4103	1897
Ireland	6189	—	—	610	5579	4521
Total for United Kingdom	37363	1010	181	2010	34162	15422

G. Hewitt,

Lt. Gen.

Abstract of a List of such Yeomanry and Volunteer Corps as have been accepted, and placed upon the Establishments in Ireland.

Dublin Castle, 5th Dec. 1803.

COUNTIES.	Captains.	Subalterns.	Serjeants.	Drums, &c.	Establishment.	
					Rank and File.	
					Cav.	Inf.
Antrim	66	131	144	54	314	4674
Armagh	29	63	138	20	108	2670
Carlow	17	36	55	14	142	1008
Cavan	37	75	134	30	190	2505
Clare	17	31	41	14	335	499
Cork (County)	73	143	211	70	960	3382
Cork (City)	21	43	77	20	360	1120
Donegal	28	61	123	28	330	2250
Down	79	129	233	58	285	4589
Dublin (County)	37	79	102	36	443	1700
Dublin (City)	87	170	192	66	440	3682
Fermanagh	39	75	160	25	188	3050
Galway	33	76	90	31	427	1413
Kerry	13	25	39	12	148	556
Kildare	17	34	49	14	273	630
Kilkenny	21	41	60	21	225	971
King's County	32	58	85	29	275	1395
Leitrim	12	31	58	12	180	950
Limerick	27	54	90	25	558	1244
Londonderry	25	55	137	46	266	2630
Longford	14	24	37	11	102	680
Louth	17	38	76	20	247	1140
Mayo	22	43	65	20	120	1140
Meath	24	46	76	20	263	1239
Monaghan	23	46	99	23	170	1800
Queen's County	33	51	92	26	337	1490
Roscommon	14	29	38	13	265	511
Sligo	19	35	46	17	115	892
Tipperary	52	93	172	56	796	2618
Tyrone	67	156	270	67	274	5372
Waterford	20	45	80	19	361	1216
Westmeath	16	33	61	15	139	1022
Wexford	45	67	138	31	371	2252
Wicklow	50	90	135	40	270	2466
Grand Total	1126	2206	3573	1003	10277	64756

Grand Total 82241

Whitehall,
13th December, 1803.

J. King.

*Abstract of the Returns of all the Volunteer and Yeomanry Corps of Great-Britain
whose Services have been accepted by his Majesty, describing each Corps.*

				Rank and File.					Rank and File.
	Cav.	Infan.	Art.	File.		Cav.	Infan.	Art.	File.
Aberdeen	..	3400	120	3520	London	560	13338	..	12460
Anglesea	..	1000	..	1000	Middlesex	82	8299	..	8370
Argyll	..	2028	63	2091	Man, Isle of	..	695	..	693
Ayr	144	2677	..	2691	Merioneth	..	464	..	464
Banff	..	960	80	1022	Monmouth	125	1624	..	1656
Bedford	177	1801	..	1978	Montgomery	120	1560	..	1680
Berks	634	3006	..	3484	Nairn	..	320	..	320
Berwick	160	772	..	911	Norfolk	1120	6511	108	6918
Brecon	..	1196	..	1196	Northampton	1037	3436	..	4089
Bucks	1122	2426	..	3121	Northumberland	517	4411	..	4726
Bute	..	38	..	90	Nottingham	472	3635	..	4107
Caithness	..	1272	..	1320	Oxford	591	3322	..	3516
Cambridge	163	2485	..	2500	Orkney and Zetland	..	..	..	..
Cardigan	..	567	..	531	Peebles	52	480	..	532
Carmarthen	120	2316	..	2347	Pembroke	440	1852	70	2701
Carnarvon	..	1100	..	1073	Perth	160	3897	63	4036
Chester	732	4841	105	5372	Radnor	..	1000	..	1000
Clackmannon	40	296	..	336	Renfrew	..	2701	..	2414
Cinque Ports	..	..	..	..	Ross	..	1620	..	1620
Cornwall	383	5432	2328	7772	Roxburgh	108	960	..	1060
Cromarty	..	160	..	164	Rutland	160	335	..	495
Cumberland	56	3431	320	3736	Salop	940	5022	..	5852
Denbigh	194	2344	..	2464	Selkirk	50	100	..	142
Derby	330	5277	..	5852	Somerset	1544	7747	..	9080
Devon	1873	13197	1325	15212	Stafford	1090	5425	..	6072
Dorset	515	2201	..	2340	Stirling	308	1318	65	1667
Dumbarton	88	605	..	630	Suffolk	769	6837	..	7332
Dumfries	84	1875	..	1879	Sutherland	..	1092	..	1092
Durham	573	3814	300	4440	Surrey	944	7801	..	8105
Elgin	..	770	..	784	Sussex	1024	6114	637	6198
Essex	1251	6335	..	7033	Tower Hamlets	..	4173	..	3742
Fife	350	2613	00	2906	Warwick	708	3874	..	4146
Flint	270	2429	..	2698	Westminster	260	10438	..	10684
Forfar	47	2692	70	2717	Westmoreland	..	1420	..	1420
Glamorgan	213	2488	..	2301	Wight, Isle of	120	1732	184	2030
Gloucester	644	6436	176	7161	Wigtown	105	624	..	729
Hants	1252	7164	836	9509	Wilts	850	4524	..	5176
Hereford	180	3720	..	3532	Worcester	494	4046	..	4304
Hertford	625	2319	50	2762	York, North Riding	267	4381	..	4683
Huntingdon	166	840	..	1006	York, East Riding	382	3473	61	3890
Inverness	..	3666	..	3320	York, West Riding	1606	12990	50	14005
Kent	1530	8804	253	10295					
Kincardine	..	824	..	824	Total of effective Rank and File				341,687
Kinross	..	280	..	280	Field Officers				1,246
Kircudbright	200	746	..	946	Captains				4,472
Lanark	65	4448	..	4513	Subalterns				9,918
Lancaster	586	13710	560	14278	Staff Officers				1,100
Leicester	622	2946	..	3488	Serjeants				14,787
Lincoln	713	4560	..	7866	Drummers				6,733
Linlithgow	80	800	..	638					
Lothian, East	205	700	..	905					
Lothian, Mid.	300	1574	..	1843					
Lothian, Mid.	..	..	..	..					
Edinburg City	..	4858	415	4757					
					Grand Total				379,943

Whitehall,

9th December, 1803.

Reginald Pole Carew.

List of Acts passed in the present Session of Parliament, from the opening of the Session on Tuesday, Nov. 22, 1803, to the Christmas Recess, Tuesday, Dec. 20, 1803.

1. An Act to continue, until six Months after the Ratification of a Definitive Treaty of Peace, the Restrictions contained in several Acts made in the 37th, 38th, 42nd, and 43rd Years of the Reign of his present Majesty, on Payments of Cash by the Bank of England. [15th Dec. 1803.]
2. An Act for granting to his Majesty the Sum of Eight Thousand Pounds, for the present Relief of certain Curates in England. [15th Dec. 1803.]
3. An Act to regulate the Bonds issued by the East India Company with Respect to the Rate of Interest, and the Duty payable thereon. [15th Dec. 1803.]
4. An Act to continue several Laws relating to the suspending the Operation of two Acts of the 15th and 17th Years of the Reign of his present Majesty, for restraining the Negotiation of Promissory Notes and Bills of Exchange under a limited Sum in England; and to the prohibiting the Importation from, and permitting the Exportation to, Great Britain of Corn; and for allowing the Importation of other Articles of Provision without payment of Duty, until the 25th Day of March, 1805; and to the regulating the Trade and Commerce to and from the Isle of Malta, until six Months after the Ratification of a Definitive Treaty of Peace. [15th Dec. 1803.]
5. An Act to continue, until the 25th Day of March 1805, an Act, passed in the last Session of Parliament, for discontinuing certain Drawbacks and Bounties on the Exportation of Sugar from Great Britain, and for allowing other Drawbacks and Bounties in Lieu thereof. [15th Dec. 1803.]
6. An Act for suspending, until the 1st Day of August, 1804, the Operation of an Act, made in the last Session of Parliament, to continue and amend two Acts, made in the Parliament of Ireland, for restraining the Negotiation of Promissory Notes and Inland Bills of Exchange, under a limited Sum, within Ireland. [15th Dec. 1803.]
7. An Act to indemnify such Persons in the United Kingdom as have omitted to qualify themselves for Offices and Employments; and for extending the Times limited for those Purposes respectively, until the 25th Day of December, 1804; and to permit such persons in Great Britain as have omitted to make and file Affidavits of the Execution of Indentures of Clerks and Attornies and Solicitors, to make and file the same on or before the first Day of Michaelmas Term, 1804. [15th Dec. 1803.]
8. An Act to continue, until six Weeks after the Commencement of the next Session of Parliament, an Act, made in the last Session of Parliament, intitled, 'An Act to empower the Lord Lieutenants or other Chief Governor or Governors of Ireland, to apprehend and detain such Persons as he or they shall suspect for conspiring against his Majesty's Person and Government, until six Weeks after the commencement of the next Session of Parliament.' [15th Dec. 1803.]
9. An Act to continue, until six Weeks after the Commencement of the next Session of Parliament, an Act passed in the last Session of Parliament, intitled, 'An Act for the Suppression of Rebellion in Ireland, and for the Protection of the Persons and Property of his Majesty's faithful Subjects there, to continue in force until six Weeks after the Commencement of the next Session of Parliament.' [15th Dec. 1803.]
10. An Act to continue, until the 25th Day of March 1805, several Acts of the 41st, 42nd, and 43rd Years of his present Majesty's Reign, for regulating the Drawbacks and Bounties on the Exportation of Sugar from Ireland. [15th Dec. 1803.]
11. An Act for enabling the Lord Lieutenant or other Chief Governor or Governors of Ireland, to prohibit, until the 25th Day of March 1805, the Distillation of Spirits from Oats or Oatmeal in Ireland; and for indemnifying such Persons as have acted in advising or carrying into execution a Proclamation of the Lord Lieutenant and Council of Ireland for prohibiting such Distillation. [15th Dec. 1803.]
12. An Act to continue, until the 25th Day of March 1805, so much of an Act, made in the 41st Year of his present Majesty's Reign, as relates to the prohibiting the Exportation from Ireland of Corn or Potatoes, or other Provisions; and to the permitting the Importation into Ireland of Corn, Fish, and Provisions, without payment of Duty. [15th Dec. 1803.]
13. An Act to prevent the Desertion and Escape of Petty Officers, Seamen, and others, from his Majesty's Service, by Means or under colour of any civil or criminal Process. [15th Dec. 1803.]
14. An Act to amend two Acts, passed in the 41st and 43rd Years of the Reign of his present Majesty, for permitting Portugal Wine to be landed and warehoused in the United Kingdom; and to allow Spanish Wine to be so landed and warehoused. [15th Dec. 1803.]
15. An Act for raising the Sum of Five Millions by Loans or Exchequer Bills, on the Credit of such Aids or Supplies as have been or shall be granted by Parliament for the Service of Great Britain, for the Year 1804. [15th Dec. 1803.]
16. An Act for continuing and granting to his Majesty certain Duties upon Malt, in Great Britain, for the Service of the Year 1804. [15th Dec. 1803.]
17. An Act for continuing and granting to his Majesty a Duty on Pensions, Offices, and Personal Estates in England; and certain Duties on Sugar, Malt, Tobacco and Snuff, in Great Britain, for the Service of the Year 1804. [15th Dec. 1803.]
18. An Act to explain and amend two Acts, passed in the 42nd and 43rd Years of the Reign of his present Majesty, relating to Volunteers and Yeomanry Corps in Great Britain. [20th Dec. 1803.]

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, February 1, 1804.

[MINUTES.]—The House met this day pursuant to adjournment. The Speaker took the Chair at half past three. A bill for inclosing lands within the manor and parish of Kettering, in the county of Northampton, was read a second time, and committed.—Mr. Hobhouse brought in a bill for enabling his Majesty to settle certain lands on his Royal Highness the Duke of York. Read a first time, and ordered for a second reading.—A new writ was also issued for the election of a member for Truro, in the room of J. Lemon, Esq., who since his election, has accepted the place of Commissioner for executing the office of lord high admiral of Great Britain.—A new writ was also issued for the election of a member for Wallingford, in the room of Sir F. Sykes, deceased.—Mr. Vansittart moved, that there be laid before the House the amount of the net produce of the permanent taxes, from the 5th January 1803, to the 5th January 1804, distinguishing each quarter. Ordered.—Mr. Secretary Yorke gave notice, that he should this day se'nnight move for leave to bring in a bill to consolidate, explain, and amend, the several acts that have been passed respecting the volunteers.—The Chancellor of the Exchequer gave notice, that he should to-morrow move for a select committee, to inquire into the state of the civil list. He should also move to-morrow for a select committee to take into consideration the joint account between Great Britain and Ireland.

[MIDDLESEX ELECTION PETITION.]—Mr. Fox rose to draw the attention of the House to a petition which had been presented against the return for Middlesex, by a certain description and number of persons, stating themselves to be freeholders of that county. With regard to the point of time he had not a moment to lose in making the observations which occurred to him respecting the formality of that petition, as the merits of the petition were to be taken into consideration to-morrow. But what he had to observe with respect to that petition, would be best understood by a reference to the 28th of the King. The House would recollect, that for the better arrangement of petitions on controverted elections, several provisions had been made in that act, not only for preventing the penalties of the act, but also for preventing the presentation of undue and informal petitions; one of those provisions stated, in a very plain and distinct manner, that the House could not proceed at all on

any petition, unless the persons whose names were subscribed to it claimed the right of voting at such election, or set forth a claim to a seat in that House in consequence of the result of such an election. The petition to which he alluded, and to which he intended to object, was signed by persons not stating their claim to a right to vote, or to a seat in that House in consequence of the issue of the Middlesex election; it was consequently a petition not squared and modelled agreeably to the provision of the act which he had already quoted. As to the proceedings of the House previous to the passing of that act, they were regulated on acts of a more liberal or more loose construction. But that act was in its nature so strictly obligatory upon the House, that in his opinion, it particularly called upon them, not to set the example of disobeying a law so pointedly and forcibly laid down. If it should appear to the House, that on the occasion of this petition, their proceedings were had upon erroneous grounds, it would be now for their wisdom and better judgment to rectify the mistake. It might be a question which was the more proper mode of proceeding on the present occasion; he should take the liberty of suggesting two modes; either, that the order which stands for to-morrow for taking the Middlesex petition into consideration be discharged, as far as it relates to the petition in question; or if it did not appear to occasion any material inconvenience from a short delay, to defer the order until Friday, that in the interim the House might make up their mind with regard to the objections which he had insinuated against the petition. Either mode of proceeding would meet with his concurrence. The hon. gent. then moved, that the provisions of the act to which he alluded, should be read, and also the petition, in order to shew that it was not in strict conformity with those provisions; which being done, he declared it to be his intention to move, that the House do adopt either of the modes of proceeding respecting it, which he had already stated.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, that he could not subscribe to the sentiments expressed by the hon. gent. as he entertained an opinion altogether different upon the point in question, from that which seemed to be entertained by the hon. gent. He hoped, however, the House would not be unwilling to adopt one of the modes which had been pointed out; for on a point of such essential importance, mature deliberation was evidently necessary. But though the question were to be delayed, yet even now

he felt desirous to state two grounds of doubt respecting the validity of the objections urged by the hon. gent.—First, he thought it advisable for the House to pause, and inquire into the practice of former times, before they pronounced whether those who stiled themselves freeholders did not, by so denominating themselves, intimate their claim to a right of voting at such election: for upon what ground could they be entitled to approach that House, unless as freeholders, who had a claim to a right of vote. The House should therefore be cautious to give a fair and equitable construction to the petition. At all events, the petitioners should be allowed an opportunity to ascertain their right, and to make out a case for the House to judge upon. He had also room to doubt, whether it had been right in the House to presume a disability on the part of persons who stated themselves to be freeholders, and who, upon that statement, insinuate a claim to a right to vote. The question he thought to be a matter of much delicacy and intricacy, and, therefore, he must wish that sufficient time be allowed to take it into due consideration.

Mr. Fox then moved, that the order of the day be read for taking the petitions into consideration to-morrow; which being read accordingly, the order was discharged, and a new order made out for taking the Middlesex petition, and the petition for Midhurst, into consideration on Friday next.—Mr. Fox, after consulting a few minutes with some of his friends, rose, and gave notice, that he should to-morrow make a motion for rejecting the petition to which he had adverted.—The Committees of Supply, and of Ways and Means were deferred till Friday, after which the House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, February 2, 1804.

[MINUTES].—Quintin Dick, Esq. took the oaths and his seat for the burgh of Westloe, in Cornwall.—Sir John William Anderson, presented a petition from the Directors of the West India Dock Company, praying for leave to bring in a bill enabling them to raise further sums of money for the completion of the works necessary to finish the docks. The petition was referred to a Committee.—Sir J. Newport moved for an account of the sums of money paid for the support of Houses of Industry in Ireland, by the grand juries of that country, in the years 1801-2 and 3. Ordered.—The Chancellor of the Exchequer moved, that leave be

given to bring in a bill to indemnify such persons as may have suffered by the act prohibiting the exportation of corn.—As the committee appointed to settle the accounts between Great Britain and Ireland up to the year 1801, was considered as dissolved by the prorogation of Parliament, the right hon. gent. also moved, that the committee be re-appointed, and that it resume its proceedings on Monday morning next. He also moved, that a select committee be appointed to inquire into the state of his Majesty's civil list. The following are the names of the committee:—The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Sec. Yorke, The Sec. at War, Right Hon. Wm. Pitt, Sir Wm. Scott, The Attorney General, The Solicitor General, Mr. Rose, Sir Wm. Pulteney, Sir W. W. Wynne, Lord G. Cavendish, Lord G. Thynne, Mr. Steele, Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Manning, Mr. Ellison, Mr. Plumer, Sir J. Frederic, Right Hon. J. H. Addington, Mr. Vansittart, Mr. Sturgess.—It was moved, that said committee have leave to sit, notwithstanding any adjournment of the House, and that five members be a quorum.—He also moved for a committee to consider of a bill to adjust the differences between the cotton manufacturers and their servants. All which motions were respectively agreed to.

[MIDDLESEX ELECTION PETITION.]—

Mr. Fox rose, agreeably to his notice of yesterday, to call the attention of the House to the petition of certain persons, styling themselves freeholders of Middlesex, complaining of the return for that county.—The hon. member began by stating, that the point to be considered by the House, was one so clear, and so little liable to any possibility of difference of opinion, that he did not conceive it necessary to occupy the time of the House with any detailed arguments. It would not, he conceived, be attempted to be denied, that acts of Parliament were in every case, to be interpreted in a manner, as nearly as possible, agreeably to the precise letter, and if this was permitted as a general principle, it could not be denied, that such a mode of interpretation was more especially proper, when the act itself was framed for the express purpose of putting an end to vague ideas of the intentions of the legislature. The House had, on the present occasion a very simple duty to perform. They had only to lay out of their consideration every idea but the positive mandatory injunctions of the act, and then their decision could not, even for a moment, become a matter of doubt. Gentlemen, he was convinced, need not be reminded of the circumstances which originally gave rise to the

Grenville act. It was an act expressly founded on the bad opinion entertained of the House of Commons in the exercise of its judicial powers. It was an act originating in constitutional jealousy, and designed to correct an evil, the existence of which all parties admitted. Having said this, it was proper for him to add, that the act, which originally encountered the strongest opposition, had, from experience, been found productive of the most beneficial effects. Those who had originally resisted it with the greatest zeal, had seen reason to alter their opinion, and those who were, in the first instance, its warmest opponents, had become its most sincere admirers. He had no hesitation in admitting that he himself was among this number. It was, therefore, not to be denied, that the origin of the act was a virtual admission that the House collectively were very bad judges of law, so far as it concerned the mode in which the fairness of elections was to be decided. After the passing of the Grenville Act, in the first instance, the obvious conclusion was, that all discretion was taken away from the House, and that every thing connected with election petitions was to be regulated by the precise provisions of the act. It was quite impossible to dispute the truth of this position. So much; however, was the legislature impressed with the idea that this was the clear meaning of the act, that it was judged necessary to bring in a bill to put this matter, if possible, in a still clearer point of view.—By the act of the 28th of his Majesty, the power of the House in receiving or rejecting petitions was clearly defined. In this act it was exactly stated what was the description of petitions on which the House were to proceed, and what was the nature of those which could not, consistent with the spirit and provisions of the original act, be admitted. In the original act, it was positively intended that all power of preliminary judgment should be taken away from the House. It was declared, that if petitions were of such and such a nature, they should be laid before a committee; but that if they were of a different description, and character, they should be declared inconsistent with the provisions of the act, which was to regulate all proceedings relative to controverted elections. These original provisions might, perhaps, in strict interpretation, have been conceived to be sufficient; but lest any possibility of mistake should arise, lest any circumstances should occur which might endanger a recurrence to the decision of the House, which was taken for granted to be highly liable to error; the

28th of his Majesty had in view the direct prevention of any such inconvenience. It was meant to declare all preliminary decisions beyond their reach. It was to bind the House to receive petitions under certain specified circumstances, and to reject others in which particular allegations were not distinctly laid down. With this view of the subject, he felt himself called to state his preliminary objection to the House's entertaining the petition. The House was bound by positive statute; and, if so, he was not to be told of precedents, which, even if they did exist, could prove nothing against a direct enactment of the legislature. But, with respect to precedents, he really could not conceive, that in the short interval of sixteen years since the passing of the act of the 28th of his Majesty, such precedents could be found, or attempted to be urged on the present occasion. Admitting, however, that they exist, it would be monstrous and absurd to urge them as reasons for contravening a law drawn up in clear, intelligible, incontrovertible terms. To limit the jurisdiction of a court, and to direct the mode in which its future proceedings were to be regulated, might be wise, under particular circumstances. After these regulations were formed, however, they must be obligatory. It was needless for him to impress on the House the absurdity of first forming rules for the direction of a particular court, and then suffering the decisions of that court to go directly in the face of the previous rules for the conduct of its proceedings. In this case the original act was rendered totally ridiculous, and the decisions of a court defeated the regulation which was meant to prevent its irregularities or errors. The clause in the act on which he rested his motion, was one so couched, as, in his mind, to remove all possibility of doubt. It struck him as being one of the most simple and conclusive in the Statute Book. In the clause of the act it was distinctly declared, that the House were not to admit to the consideration of a committee, a petition in the body of which it was not stated, on behalf of those who signed it, that they had a right, at the time of the election, to vote as unexceptionable freeholders. Now, in this case, the persons signing the petition in question had done no such thing. If they had even claimed their right indirectly, there might have been some room for consideration, how far the petition could, consistently with the law of Parliament, be received. But here there was nothing actually alleged, which could at all authorize the House in receiving the petition. It was, forsooth,

signed by freeholders ! He did not mean to deny, that those who signed the petition were freeholders, or that they might not have had a right to vote. But why had they not stated this in their petition ? He himself was a freeholder of Middlesex at the time of the election, but under circumstances which prevented him from exercising his elective franchise. Many others, he believed, were in a similar situation, and how then was the House to presume, that those who signed the petition were not in the same circumstances, since they had not themselves produced any proofs of their qualification at the time of the election ? There were many persons freeholders now, who were not entitled to vote when the election took place. It was the simplest process in the world for the petitioners to have declared, in the body of the petition, their right of voting, if they did at the time of the election possess it ; but it was too much to call on the House to presume their right, in express contempt of an act of parliament. A freehold property of forty shillings a year was what the law required as a qualification to vote for a county member ; but, in the first instance, the House had nothing whatever to do with this qualification, when a petition was first laid on their table. He would, in illustration of his opinion, put a strong case, which, in proportion as it was strong, would more clearly illustrate his idea of the meaning of the act. If a petition were presented, not by the real freeholders of Middlesex, but by a tumultuous crowd assembled at the door of that House, assuming the name of freeholders ; even if an outrage of this audacious nature were practised, he would affirm, that in the first instance, the petition must be received and sent to a Committee. The paper, such as it was, purported to be the petition of Middlesex freeholders, and the House had no authority to take cognizance of the fraud in the first instance. It was with the Committee to ascertain and to punish such an attempt to impose on the legislature. Even admitting that the present petition were signed by Sarah or Judah, instead of William and Thomas, still it must go to the Committee, and with them rested the ultimate decision. The petition contained allegations, and till the Committee had determined on its merits, the House had no right to presume that they were false. With the fact the House could have no interference. The law required, that every petition should contain certain allegations, and the question was, whether those who signed the petition had complied with its requisitions.

Had they claimed their right to vote at the last election ? If they had, then the argument was at an end. If they had not, then the question was equally resolved, unless the House were disposed to decide in the face of a positive law. The petitioners might be very respectable individuals, as he had no doubt they were, and it might appear, on examination, that their right to vote was undoubted ; all this might be safely admitted, and still the question would stand precisely where it did before the matter was agitated.—The only point was to consider how far the petition was drawn in such terms as could bring the consideration of its merits under the provisions of the Grenville Act. There might be a great appearance of equity in the case, but still the law must be permitted to have its force. If cases of equity were to supersede statutes, the beneficial effects of which were universally admitted, legislative provisions were a mere nullity. The honourable gentleman here noticed the petition which he had himself presented on the subject of the conduct of the high bailiff of Westminster, in the famous contested election of 1784. He believed, that there never was a case laid down in any petition of more obvious and striking equity than that petition contained. The majority of the House were convinced of this, even while they resisted the admission of the petition. They rested their opposition solely on the ground of the allegations which it contained not being such as the Grenville Act had specified to be necessary, previous to the introduction of any petition. So sensible were the House of the necessity of rigidly adhering to the provisions of the act, that a petition confessed to be equitable in itself was rejected, and a short time afterwards a new act was introduced, to remedy an admitted inconvenience. As the law now stood, the matter was reduced to the simplest principles. Whatever was the matter of the petition, the House were to leave it wholly to the Committee. They were not to deliberate or decide. They were to admit or reject a petition, not because the admission or rejection was wise, or the contrary, not because it was or was not founded in equity, but because the provisions of the act were peremptorily mandatory, and were not under any circumstances to be disobeyed. The legislature was now, strictly bound to the observance of a particular mode of proceeding, and it was quite absurd to think of getting rid of it. He had heard of petitions of a description similar to the present having been admitted, and afterwards submitting to a

Committee. For his own part, he was ignorant of the existence of such precedents; but even if they did exist, their existence did not at all invalidate his argument. It might have happened accidentally, but was that to be seriously urged as an argument to shew, that when an error was discovered it was not to be rectified? If the act unequivocally pointed out a particular mode of proceeding, was a precedent directly in the teeth of its provisions to be brought forward to justify subsequent irregularity? It would hardly be contended, that if an evil was found to exist, that no means should be taken to correct it, because it had escaped observation in a variety of preceding instances, and when the means of correction were at once easy and efficacious. The proper mode of administering the correction in the present instance was by discharging the petition. On this matter, his own mind was completely satisfied. He wished, if there should be two opinions, which he hardly expected, that gentlemen who should take a view of the subject different from what he did, would explain what other meaning could be attached to the clause of the act than that which he attached to it. If the construction which he had put on the clause was not correct, he was desirous of being informed what description of petition it was, to which the clause was referred. He really was at a loss to conceive, how the act could express any meaning, if the meaning which he had affixed to it were objected to. He would put a case in illustration of his opinion. He would put the case of a petition signed by persons who were merely copyholders, signing a petition, in the body of which petition, they claimed a right of voting at the election. It was clear that they had no right of voting, and perhaps gentlemen would immediately contend that such a petition was to be instantly rejected as a matter of course. He could not, however, at all accede to this opinion. It was clear, that the petition would be found to be eventually frivolous; but it did not at all follow, that in the first instance it was not to be submitted to a Committee, to judge of its merits. There was another case still more important, the consideration of which, indeed, would in all probability form the basis for the final decision of the Committee of the Middlesex petitions. This was the case of the joint tenants, which was known to have excited a great deal of interest. If it had been the case of a body of electors, who were in a situation to be rated, but had never actually paid the rate, presenting a petition, he was not at all prepared to say, that the House

would be entitled to reject the petition, because they entertained an opinion that the petitioners would ultimately fail in proving the fairness of their claims. The same principle he would apply to a petition from persons claiming a right of voting at the election for the county. It would not be argued for a moment, that a petition from these joint tenants was to be rejected, because the House might imagine that their claim to the right of election was altogether erroneous. Such a decision would be equally irregular and unjust. It would be prejudging what was afterwards to come before the Committee. It would be an attempt to execute that very office which, by the passing of the Grenville Act, the House was declared incapable of performing with fairness and impartiality. The House could not argue the question of the competency of any petitioners complaining of an undue election. They had not the evidence on which any fair decision could be formed. They were not the court before which the general question was to be tried. It was very clear that copyholders had not a right of voting; but of a petition signed by copyholders, the House were not entitled to hold an opinion. He mentioned this case from its being so clear, and when he stated this, he meant to include in the observation the incompetency of the House to assume to themselves that right of determining the merits of petitions, which was reserved for a special tribunal. Whether petitioners had, or had not a right to vote, was the subject of future consideration. The House had a simple task to execute. They were to determine, whether a petition complied with the terms of the act. In the present instance, he trusted, that he had shewn that the petition was irregular, and he should therefore conclude with moving, that the order of the day for the consideration of the petition of certain persons, stating themselves freeholders of Middlesex, be read.—The order was read accordingly.—Mr. Fox then moved that the said order be discharged.—The motion being put from the chair,

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* rose to reply. He had listened with the utmost attention to all that had fallen from the hon. gent., and the result was, that the impression which he felt yesterday, when the subject was first mentioned, had not only remained unimpaired, but was now considerably strengthened and confirmed. He was ready to concur heartily with the hon. member in his views of the importance of the subject, both as it respected the propriety of adhering rigidly to the provisions of every act of the legislature, and the necessity of

avoiding all restraint on the right of the subject to lay their petition against any supposed infringement of their elective franchises before Parliament. He allowed that the Grenville Act was founded on a principle of jealousy and distrust of the judicial proceeding of that House, and that the intention of the act was to annihilate the existence of discretionary powers of decision. But it was his very conviction of this meaning of the act, which at present made him particularly desirous of resisting the motion now submitted to the House. He thought that the interference proposed was of a very dangerous and unconstitutional nature. It would be nothing short of breaking in upon a regular course of precedents, and counteracting the fundamental principles of all the laws for arranging the exercise of the elective franchise. As to the persons entitled to petition, he had a few observations to submit to the House. After the passing of the act of the 10th of his Majesty, the number of persons conceiving themselves entitled to petition under the act was so great, that the table of the House was covered with petitions, and very material inconvenience was experienced. It was to remedy this inconvenience that the 28th of his Majesty was passed. In that act, the persons entitled to petition were designated; but he wished to ask the hon. member, whether he meant to affirm, that the act expressly required that persons petitioning should expressly state their right of voting in the body of the petition?

Mr. Fox having answered this question in the affirmative,

The right hon. gent. resumed, and contended that this was not what he conceived to be at all in the contemplation of the legislature at the time the act was framed. All that was meant by the clause was, the general designation of freeholders should be observed. If the general qualification of the freeholders, and their right to vote was stated, then he would argue that the plain, direct, common sense meaning of the clause was satisfied, and the mandatory injunctions of the act were fulfilled. The hon. gent. had expressed his opposition to any argument drawn from precedents; but, for his own part, he thought that there was no more fair or parliamentary mode of construing the meaning of acts of the legislature. The people of this country would have reason to complain that they were hardly dealt by, if after the lapse of thirteen years, in which numerous instances of petitions drawn up in similar terms being admitted to a Committee, they were in consequence of a mere inadvertency, to be deprived of a most im-

portant constitutional privilege. The precedents were indeed so numerous, that during the first session after the meeting of parliament, subsequent to the passing of the act, there was hardly one to be found of an opposite description. He alluded here to the petition presented after the general election in 1790, and particularly noticed the petitions from Stirling, and Orkney and Shetland, which were both drawn up in terms similar to that now the subject of discussion; there was, however, no objection to their being submitted to the consideration of a Committee.—A number of other petitions at that time were drawn in terms by no means the same as those which the hon. member contended to be essential. In many of them the petitioners described themselves as legal electors, or as freemen, but not as confining to the terms on which so much stress had been laid. The House were satisfied that the common sense meaning of the act had been fulfilled, and the petitions were sent to a Committee, for a decision of their merits. With all this body of precedents in their possession, he trusted that the House would not consent to entertain the hon. member's proposition. Cases of a much weaker sort than that now before the House had been sustained. The petitioners had, *prima facie*, a right to be considered as electors from their common law right as freeholders. It would, he considered, be very unjust to consider them disqualified, from the mere circumstance of their omitting to state in so many words, that at the last election their right existed in full force. It would bear particularly hard on them at the moment when they were prepared to support their allegation, and to vindicate their claims as freeholders, to be stopped short, as the hon. member had proposed, and thus be debarred all opportunity of asserting their most valuable constitutional rights. They had, at farthest, only been guilty of following what was a common practice; they had framed their petition on the same principles as that of which the Journals afforded numerous examples, and for this they were to be deprived of an opportunity of obtaining the redress of a grievance of the most serious and oppressive kind! While he contended for the claim of the petitioners to have their petition laid before a Committee, it was far, indeed, from his intention to affirm, that before that Committee their claims were without examination to be admitted. It was before the Committee that the real merits of the question were to be decided. In admitting the petition now, the House hazarded no opinion of any description. They left

the whole question open for the fullest consideration. If the petitioners had assumed a false character; if they had imposed on the House by claims which were false, they would not eventually triumph by this fraud. Their falsehood would be detected, and they would suffer the punishment which their duplicity would richly deserve. If they were women; if they were minors, or if their qualification was below the legal standard, then their petition must of course, be rejected. It was too much, however, to presume, that they were disqualified, in the total absence of all evidence to establish such a position. In receiving the petition the House would be guided by practice. In rejecting it, they would do what was equally rigorous and unjust. The right hon. gent. concluded by giving his decided negative to the motion.

Mr. Francis.—Sir; it appears to me that the question, whether this petition ought or ought not to be referred to a Committee, is a question of positive law, and cannot be determined by any other rule or principle. The legislature has foreseen and provided for the case. We have no right to enter into any considerations external or collateral to the specific provision of the law. There is no appeal from the rigour of the Act of Parliament to the equity of this House. We have no legal competence to proceed in any petition against an undue return, in which the petitioners do not distinctly state or allege that they had a right of voting at the election. These petitioners have not made that allegation. But the Right Hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer asserts, that these petitioners have followed the example of others, that the course of the House has been to proceed in petitions, in which the allegation of right has been omitted, and that they ought not to suffer because they cannot have been misled by following the practice of the House as they find it in the Journals. Certainly the right hon. gentleman's doctrine conveys an excellent instruction to the present and to all future petitioners. "Do not look into the Act of Parliament, never inquire what the law prescribes, or how it directs you to act. All you have to do is to examine the journals of the House of Commons, and govern yourselves by the precedents or course of proceeding, as you find it in those Journals." This, though not so delivered in terms, is the real result and amount of the right hon. gentleman's doctrine. Then, Sir, I ask, who, and what is the House of

Commons, whose authority is set above that of the legislature? Why, Sir, it is, or rather it was a tribunal, whose decisions in matters of elections were so notoriously partial, whose disposition or capacity to try contested elections with fairness was so universally doubted, whose integrity on such points was so much distrusted, that the legislature found it necessary to take the whole jurisdiction of such causes out of their hands; and who, by concurring in the act, that deprived them of their power, confessed that they deserved to lose it. I am not disposed to trust any thing to the discretion of the House of Commons, on questions, in which the legislature places no confidence in them; and even if I were so disposed, the supreme power of Parliament has left me no discretion on the subject.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer begged leave to have the precedents read by the clerk, to which he alluded in the course of his speech, and in which no claim, with respect to the right of voting at the time of election, had been set up by the petitioners, although their petitions had been taken into consideration, and decided on by the House. The first was that of the 3d of December, 1790, presented by freeholders of the County of Stirling; the second that of the 8th of December, in the same year, presented by freeholders of the stewartries of Orkney and Shetland; and the third that of the 14th in the same year, presented by the freeholders of the county of Radnor. There was also another from Worcester, precisely of a similar nature, presented the 20th of October, 1796. It further appeared, that there were two cases of the same kind which had occurred during the present Parliament. The first was the petition of freeholders of the county of Caermarthen, on the 1st of September, 1802; and the second related to the freeholders of Stirling. It should not be forgotten, that in the Committee to which, they had been referred, a question was started, similar to the one started that evening by the hon. gent.; yet, notwithstanding the discussions arising from the question, the Committees proceeded, and the petitions were not only taken into consideration, but that from the freeholders of Stirling was renewed. The Chancellor of the Exchequer concluded with observing, that he could cite many other cases in 1790, and 1796, of a nature precisely the same as those which had been read, but he felt it his duty not to trouble the House with any precedents in addition, which he

trusted, would prove satisfactory and decisive.

Mr. *T. Grenville* took an historical review of the custom of Parliament which preceded, and the motives which urged to, the introduction of the Act of the 10th of his present Majesty, commonly called the Grenville Act. The grounds of that act he described to be a strong jealousy of the discretion which the House had previously exercised in deciding upon election returns, and petitions relating thereto. The surrender of that discretion to Committees to be appointed by the House, precluded, in his apprehension, such a decision upon the case then under discussion as the motion of the hon. gent. (Mr. Fox) called for. According to the form of proceeding which prevailed previous to the enactment of the law he referred to, he believed it would be found that the general, he would not say the invariable, rule was to receive petitions from those only who claimed the right of voting at the elections to which their petitions related, and who had an interest in the decision of the same. The cause of the change produced by the Act of the 10th arose from the strong persuasion which existed in the mind of the author of that act, that it was necessary, for the best purposes, to limit the authority of the House upon Election cases. The course prescribed by that act had gone on without any alteration until the period when the Act of the 28th of the King, upon a clause on which the motion professed to be grounded, was brought before the House, in consequence of its appearing that, notwithstanding the many advantages which resulted from the act of the 10th, to which the respectable mover of the bill of the 28th bore ample testimony, yet that in the instance of persons presenting petitions, it was safe and prudent to resort to the old established custom that prevailed antecedent to the former act, and to restore to the House some part of the discretion of which it had deprived itself by that act. From that consideration arose the clause now under debate, and, as it struck his mind, the petition to which the motion alluded was not, in the point of formality so much insisted upon, inconsistent with the custom to which, after an experience of 16 years, the House, by the act of the 28th, had thought proper to recur.—This observation he put as to the equity of the case, and, with respect to the actual mandatory words of the clause, as they were described by the hon. mover, he put against this construction of that clause, the practice of the

House since the clause was enacted. From that comparison it appeared, that the interpretation given by the hon. gent. had not been acted upon. If the practice of the House had conformed precisely to the letter of the act of the 28th, he confessed that he would have felt more satisfied and pleased; and if in the petition referred to in the motion, that letter had been strictly complied with, it would, of course, have been more satisfactory, in order that the most invidious should have no room to cavil; but as a doubt did appear to exist, the best mode, in his judgment, was to refer to the custom of the House previous to the passing of the act of the 10th, and also to the manner in which the law of the 28th had been acted upon, in order to assist in the solution of the question now under discussion, and to enable the House to determine upon the interpretations most fair and equitable to adopt. As to the application of the words of the clause to the terms in which the petition was drawn up, which it was the object of the motion to reject, he was decidedly against it, and in addition to the reasons he had already stated, he said, that there was another strong and powerful motive which operated upon his mind, to prompt him to the vote which he meant to give, and it was this, that it did not appear possible that the least inconvenience, hardship, or injustice could result to any individual, by allowing this petition to be proceeded on in the ordinary way, while it could not be denied that it would be serious injury to the petitioners to exclude them from the investigation of the subject of their petition, by acceding to the present motion. The petitioners only desired that their case should be sent to trial, and the object of the motion was to shut them out from that which they had a right to claim. Under circumstances where there existed any doubt as to the construction of the letter of the law, or the practice upon that law, he could have no hesitation in deciding in favour of the petitioners; and he would put it to the candour of the House whether such was not the more equitable mode of proceeding; for he was persuaded that according to the general understanding, the form of the petition was not liable to all the objections which were started against it. The question was now raised for the first time, and, although much ingenious argument had been offered in favour of the motion, from the reasons he had stated, it ought not to be adopted.

Mr. *Jekyll* expressed his concurrence in the sentiments of the hon. mover, and his

surprise at the inferences drawn by the right hon. gent. who had just sat down, from facts which admitted of quite different conclusions. That any member should entertain a doubt upon the construction of the clause, which formed the ground-work of this motion, was to him a matter of astonishment. Nothing in legislation could be more clear and mandatory in terms, than the words of the clause in question. As to the case of Carmarthen, referred to by the right hon. gent. (the Chancellor of the Exchequer), it did not appear to him, a fair analogy to that before the House. It was, in fact, confounding the jurisdiction of a Committee with that of the House. The question now under consideration was, whether a petition should be proceeded on at all, and that was a question with which a Committee had nothing to do; for after the case was referred to them, they were bound to proceed upon it. From this the learned gentleman argued, that the allusion to the conduct of the Committee upon the Carmarthen petition was not applicable to the case before the House. In the course of the discussion before that Committee, he recollected that nearly the same grounds of objection were taken, and the same topics started as those which were heard to-day. The precedents quoted by the right hon. gent. on the Treasury Bench, to shew the practice of the House, in contradistinction to the letter of the law, were particularly relied upon, and this led his mind to inquire what was to be understood by precedents, and according to his opinion, a practice which had gone on without any litigation as to its propriety, without any discussion upon its merits, could not be considered in the light of precedents. Yet this precisely was the nature of the precedents cited upon the present occasion. This was the first time this question was raised. "The blot was hit," and the House was called upon to consider the construction of the act of the 28th, to which his hon. friend referred, and to determine whether, *ex vi termini*, the petition in question was consistent with the clause of that act so often alluded to. The House should not suffer itself to be withdrawn from the fair consideration of the words of the act, by precedents which, in fact, proved but the *malus usus* applied to it; but should rather imitate the conduct pursued by a court of law in the case of corporations, where, when a *quo warranto* is applied for against any corporation, the practice is, not to decide by any usage that might have prevailed, even if it had existed for 50 years, but

to look into the words of the charter, and upon that to ground the decision of the case.

Lord Archibald Hamilton observed, that having read the Act of the 28th of his Majesty on this subject, he could not hesitate a moment in affirming, that it was so clear and explicit on this point, that scarcely any argument was necessary. A laudable desire was expressed on the other side, for the rights of the people to petition this House. But, however much it might be wished, that the present petition should be received, it could not be properly done in the face of an Act of Parliament; nor, indeed, when there was so serious an objection against it, would it be doing justice to the other party to hear it. He was of opinion, that though the petition should be rejected, the parties were not deprived of the means of redress. It was well known, that nothing could be more frequent in the King's Bench, than to set aside a rule or declaration, merely for an informality. But the party had still the right to come forward for redress, having amended what was wrong.

Mr. Tierney said, it had been his practice, when any matter was doubtful, to open the door as widely as possible for its discussion, and he entreated the House to see what the hardship would be, and it must fall on the petitioners, if this petition was now rejected. It was worth while to look at the course which this proceeding had taken; no objection whatever was started against this petition when it was presented. What was the reason why the hon. gent. who now brought this motion forward, had stifled all those feelings which he knew he had upon this occasion in favour of substantial justice, and to insist on the dry letter of the law? It certainly must be his superior sense of duty to support the regularity of the proceedings of that House. But why had he not told these petitioners of this informality sooner? If he had said at the time of presenting this petition, that the petition could not have been received, because the words were not in it which the hon. gent. contended the act required should have been in it, the petition might have been rejected without any hardship on the petitioners; so that the formality of the proceedings of the House would have been preserved; and substantial justice might have been done to the parties complaining at the same time, for then another petition might have been presented, and the words, now said to be wanting, might have been supplied. But what was the

consequence of being silent then and loud now, if the House should adopt this motion? That of placing the petitioners in a situation in which they could never have their complaint heard at all. The House would recollect that the parties were brought into this situation by the act of the House itself, in which the hon. gent. had acquiesced, as well as every other member. No objection was made to this petition when it was presented the last session. The petitioners would have been subject to a penalty of 200*l.* if they had not renewed it in this session, that was, in other words, if the hon. gent. was right in his motion, there would have been a penalty of 200*l.* attaching on these petitioners, if they did not repeat the offence, that of renewing an irregular, illegal petition. It was said, that the spirit of the Grenville Bill, as well as the letter of it, required it should be stated in the petition, that the petitioners had a right to vote at the election, which this petition did not; and, therefore, this petition ought now to be rejected. If that was so, he could not help remarking, there would be a great hardship on the petitioners, and that by the course which had been taken to bring forward this motion; and it would look very odd if, on the very day before the petition was to come on, and a Committee to be ballotted to try the merits of it, a gentleman could get up in the House of Commons and persuade the House that the petition, on account of its informality, could not be heard at all. Besides this, if the order for taking this petition into consideration, was discharged, it would appear strange upon the Journals, for the informality of the petition would not appear upon the Journals; all that would appear there would be, that the petition had been presented in one session of parliament, and ordered to be taken into consideration on a given day, that the same petition was renewed in another session, according to the rules of the House, and that on the day before it was to have been taken into consideration, it had been rejected. No reason for its rejection would appear at all. Nothing would be seen to govern the future proceedings of the House by way of precedent, but, merely, that the House had received a petition in one session, made an order for taking it into consideration on a given day in another session, and had, on the day before the time for taking it into consideration, rejected that petition; a precedent which he thought would be dangerous. As to the wording of the act of parliament, if the act of parlia-

ment had set down the precise words to be used in such a petition, and they had not been inserted, the argument would have been invincible; but the act of parliament did not so provide, and the hon. gent. did not say so, he only insisted that the petitioners must state themselves in such a way, as to shew that they had, or claimed to have, a right to vote at the election of which they complained. There being no form of words pointed out by the act, what were the petitioners to do? They naturally thought they should do that which others did before them. He could not conceive what could be the use of a precedent, if a poor ignorant man was not to be guided by it in drawing his petition in such a case as this; and, more especially, if that was a precedent received and adopted by the House immediately after the passing of the bill, and followed up by several others, without any objection, for thirteen years together.—Now, as to the substance of the petition, it appeared to him to be sufficient. The petitioners called themselves “Freeholders of the County;” from that the obvious inference was, that as such they claimed the right of voting at the election of which they complained. Would it not then, on a mere dry technical objection, be hard to shut the door against them? By rejecting this petition now, there would be great and manifest injustice. By receiving it, there would be no injustice whatever to any one human being; for all that could be done by the House, by entertaining this petition would be to give it a hearing. His mind was satisfied that the substance of this act of parliament had been complied with in this petition. As to that part of the object of the act which was stated by the hon. gent., namely, that of preventing strangers from presenting petitions against the elections of members of parliament, he thought that the best remedy for that was the provision of the act which made them pay costs. They stated themselves not to be strangers, but that they were freeholders of the county of Middlesex; upon which the only doubt that could be entertained was, whether they were not persons who had become freeholders since? That was matter for the inquiry of a Committee. The general current of petitions was, that the petitioners were electors, and it might be said that they were minors then, but that they had become electors since; but that would be matter for the investigation of the Committee. But he should have thought, that the hon. gent. who had brought forward this motion, would have said, that he suspected the persons who had

signed this petition were not freeholders, but, on the contrary, he had stated, that he had no doubt they were freeholders; and the act of the House had decided, it thought they were, by receiving the petition. He was, indeed, confident, that the hon. gent. who made this motion would be desirous, if he succeeded in it, to have some legislative provision, for the purpose of allowing these petitioners a hearing; for, really, if this petition was informal, it was the fault of the House, that the parties could not be heard upon it, for the petitioners had stated it in the common form the House had been accustomed to receive it, that they were freeholders of Middlesex, and, whatever difficulty there was in receiving the petition under the authority of the act of parliament, the House did not tell them of it while it was in their power to correct the error. Now he asked for no legislative provision, for the purpose of hearing these petitioners, for he had not the least hesitation, in giving his negative to the motion of the hon. gent. and, in so doing, he should give a conscientious vote, for sending this matter to a committee, on condition that the merits of it may be tried.

Mr. Serjeant *Best* said, he felt himself bound to vote for the affirmative of the question now before the House; and it did appear to him to be a question of infinite importance, and much beyond the point of the merits of the case. The House was now sitting in its judicial, and not in its legislative character. That House, although a supreme court of judicature, was as much bound by the law of the land as the meanest court in the land, and indeed it was more dangerous for such a high court to do any thing contrary to law, than any other court, on account of the example of it. Now, considering this question as a lawyer, he could not say, there was much doubt upon it. He was sorry, indeed, that the objection had occurred, for it might deprive the freeholders of the county of Middlesex of redress in this case; but whatever might be infringed upon with impunity, it was better to suffer that inconvenience and adhere to the general rules of law, whatever might be the effect of such rules in a particular instance, than to bend such rules to suit the rule to any motion, real or imaginary of the substantial justice of any particular case. A great deal had been said on the equitable construction which ought to be put upon this statute. He did not assent to this doctrine, for he conceived that all acts of parliament should be construed with

strictness by that court which was to judge of its own power as it was derived under such acts. He had heard it said, that nothing which was done by Parliament could be undone by any power but that of Parliament, and Parliament might be induced to do something in this very case, if the petition should be rejected; but that had nothing to do with the present question; and as to an equitable construction of an act of parliament, especially when proposed to that House in judging of its own power under it, he objected to the principle altogether, because equitable constructions were very vague in their nature, and what appeared equitable to one man might appear quite unjust to another, and, therefore, it would be extremely dangerous to construe acts of parliament upon the vague notions of equitable construction, on the determinations of the House, upon questions relating to the extent of its own power. As to what had been said on the subject of precedents, he did not assent to it, for they appeared not to have been in force more than sixteen years, nor were they uniform, for there might be twenty instances even in that time, of petitions being different from those which had been quoted. He had looked into many upon this subject lately, and the result of his research entitled him to say this upon the current of precedents upon this subject. He agreed it was not necessary that the petition should state in express terms, that they had or claimed the right of voting at the election of which they complained; but then he insisted on it, that it must be collected from the petition somewhere, that the petitioners either had or claimed to have, a right to vote at the election of which they complained, otherwise mere strangers might complain as well as electors, a grievance which the legislature intended to prevent. Precedents were well enough to be resorted to, if the act of parliament, was dark or obscure; in such a case it would be well enough to look to former decisions; but if the act of parliament was clear, whatever number of precedents there might be, they could be of no force against the meaning of such an act, for that would be to set up the judicial authority of that House against the authority of an act of parliament, that was allowing one branch of the legislative power to annul the solemn act of the whole.—Now, he said, it was impossible to look at this act of parliament without seeing that there was but one construction to be put upon it. The act of parliament gave the House directions to decide whether a petition complaining of an

undue election or return should be committed or not, and it stated what such a petition shall contain, and without which the petition should not be sent to a committee, for it said that no proceeding shall be had on a petition—not that it shall not be decided upon, but that no proceeding can be had upon it unless there be said therein that the persons who complained were persons who claimed a right to vote at the election; and it was impossible to set up the practice of the House against an act of parliament. Looking at the preamble of the bill which governed this case, it was easy to see what was the inconvenience which the act stated it to be the object of the act to avoid. It stated, that frivolous petitions were presented by those who had no right &c., and to prevent that practice, it was enacted, That no petition should be proceeded upon, unless the persons presenting it has an interest in the event of the election. It therefore appeared to him to be quite impossible to entertain a petition, which did not state that interest in the petitioners at the time of the election. It was said that the House had drawn the party into this difficulty by receiving the petition in the last session. He did not feel the force of that observation; as well might it be said that a court of justice had drawn a suitor into a difficulty, by permitting his suit to be carried on perhaps for a twelve month, and finally deciding, after objection taken and argument upon the question, that the case did not come within the jurisdiction of the court. There were individual sacrifices that were indeed to be lamented when they happened, but they must be made for the preservation of the consistency of the law. But it appeared to him, that these parties were not without redress in this case, for there was no act of Parliament which limited the time of presenting an election petition; there was only a resolution of the House to that effect. It was easy for the House to get rid of that resolution, as it applied to this case, and to say that the parties shall have leave now to present another petition, which might be done immediately, conformably to the provisions of the act of Parliament. There was no difficulty for the House to dispense with its own resolution in this particular, and so do away at once the hardship of the case—a thing which had been done very often in order to avoid an extreme hardship in other cases, and the House had a right to make its own rules subservient to justice at any time.—That would be removing all doubt upon the subject; but if the House had no jurisdiction in this case to entertain this petition, as he conceived it had not, then it would be

in vain to send the petition to a committee, because the committee, which was but an emanation of the House, could not have any authority delegated from the House more than the House possessed, and therefore the decision of the committee could not be binding. This would be the necessary consequence of following the course proposed by those who wished to send the petition to a committee. He said that this was not a case within the act of Parliament, and, therefore, that all the House did upon it must in law be null and void.

The *Attorney General* said, that perhaps the monstrous injustice of this case might have had some influence upon his judgment, for most unquestionable it was, that monstrous injustice would be done to the petitioners, if the petition should now be rejected. If the argument upon which the motion was founded was wrong, the reason which was proposed by the hon. gent. who moved it would be worse, even than adopting the petition supposing his objections to it to be well-founded because it would be trespassing more upon the act of Parliament, than even a wrong adoption of this petition, which he maintained they were not; it would be open for the committee to consider the merits of the petition. If they were wrong in receiving the petition, the judgment of the committee would correct them, whereas if they were wrong in rejecting the petition, the question would be shut for ever. He thought, therefore, that in a question where there was a considerable degree of doubt, the House would do well to send it to a committee, rather than decide for themselves; for, in the one case, the error might be corrected, and in the other, it was impossible. From the year 1788 down to the present time, the practice of the House upon this question did not create any doubt whatever; for, petitions similar to the present had been frequently entertained, and it might be called an interpretation of the law by that House, and by receiving such petitions, they may be said to have pronounced judgment upon this statute. The case was not such as his hon. and learned friend over the way (Mr. Jekyll) stated it; for he had compared this case with the decisions of courts of justice upon cases of *quo warranto*, &c. Between the proceedings of courts of justice in such cases, and the decisions of the House upon questions of petitions, he perceived no analogy; for courts of justice, in cases of *quo warranto*, had frequently decided, that individuals were wrong, in the apprehension of their own rights, but, in this case, it was the practice of the House which had decided

upon the forms of petitions that were presented to it; besides, if the practice of the House for so many years was inconsistent with the true spirit of the act of Parliament, he was of opinion, that the best mode would be to pass another act, specifying the very words which such petition should contain, rather than now, by a single vote, overturn that practice, because in that case the House could not be said to be legislating for itself; for they must have the concurrence of another House of Parliament, as well as the royal assent, before such vote could have the force of law. As to the preamble of the act, the grievance to be avoided was, that persons should not be allowed to petition, who did not at least claim a right of election, that nobody should be allowed to call in question the merits of an election, but those who claimed the right to vote at it. Now this was not all which electors were obliged to do upon presenting a petition, they were not only obliged to state an apparent right of election, but before they could succeed in the object of their petition, they were bound to prove it. The committee could go into the question as it related to both these questions; namely, whether the statement in the petition was such as the act required, so as to entitle the petitioners to inquiry; and secondly, they could examine the proofs. But the House could go only into one of them, viz. whether the statement was sufficient to satisfy the spirit of the act. All that could be stated to the House was mere matter of form in such cases, for the House could not inquire into the merits of the subject. This House could not inquire, whether the petitioners had a right to petition or not. It could only inquire whether they had regularly stated and claimed that right, and in that view, he was of opinion, that in the present case it was sufficiently stated, and he thought that question a very important one. When he said that the spirit of the act was complied with, he meant, that in substance the petition did contain an allegation of the petitioners having a right to vote, and it was manifest to them, that a single dash of the pen, might have answered all the objections of the hon. gent. himself; the petition would have been perfectly correct—the object was, that none but those who claimed a right to vote, should be permitted to petition. Now, he was of opinion, that the petitioners, by stating themselves to be freeholders of the county, had in substance told the House they claimed the right to vote. By entertaining this petition, it only said, that this subject should be inquired of by the Committee, and as to the practice of the House, which the

hon. gent. seemed to expect, in presenting petitions, it was pretty clear that a reference to the right of the petitioners to vote at elections, existing in them at the time of the election, was very seldom stated in the petition. It was a course seldom followed by any of the petitions since the passing of the last bill; but now he collected from the hon. gent. (who whispered across the table) that, therefore, all such petitions were in themselves wrong—if it was not, he entreated of the House to look at the injustice of rejecting this petition now, for it would be a great hardship indeed, to alter the course of proceeding at this moment, and to tell these petitioners at once, for the first time, that their petition could not be received just on the eve of their trial, without any notice whatever, and without any intimation whatever, to the people of this country that such petitions were wrong; the people of this country had a right to expect that the House of Commons would not be in the habit of receiving petitions inadvertently and improperly, had a right to take it for granted, that all the petitions the House of Commons had received for the last thirteen years had been regularly received, and they had a right to complain that they had been very improperly treated and deluded by that House, if by its vote it should now tell them that this petition must be rejected. The inconvenience of it would be indescribable, for all other petitions of a similar nature must share the fate of this petition; there were perhaps twenty of them remaining, and none of them could be received if this was rejected. Such he believed to be the case of perhaps one-half of the petitions now remaining; of Durham, Aylesbury, Hereford, Stirling, and various other places. It, perhaps, might appear that not one of them contained the allegation required by the hon. gent. of the right to vote at the election; besides, he said, that in his opinion, the present petition did in fact satisfy the object of the act of Parliament, but if it did not, it was at most but a doubtful case, and if so, there was every reason for sending it to a committee.—He thought, that upon the principle of the Grenville Act, the House ought to send this petition to a Committee. If the party stated in his petition that which on the face of it showed that he had no claim to vote at the election, the House would at once say it should not go to a committee, because, in that case, there would be nothing to try; but if he did state a colourable title to vote, then the House would not decide the question, but send it to a committee to be tried. Here, in common

sense and common language, the petitioners told the House they claimed the right to vote, for they told the House they were freeholders of the county, and they complained of election; they considered it a grievance, and they asked relief; they stated themselves to be in a situation in which they had a right to vote at the election of which they complained, and therefore he said their case came within the sense of the act of Parliament, consequently that the petition should be received. He then quoted the case of the election for the county of Carmarthen, which he said was precisely in point; this very objection was taken, but it was overruled by the Committee, and that decision of the Committee had never been questioned by the House. But if that had not been so decided, there would have remained about this case, at least a sufficient degree of doubt to induce the House to send it to a Committee, because, otherwise, the question would be closed, and the party could never be heard, which would be a case of infinite hardship and injustice; so much so, that the hon. gent. himself, who made the motion, would, he was confident, regret the success of his own motion. He asked, what the public would have thought of this case, if it were the case of his right hon. friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if such a petition as this had been presented against him, and he were to suffer it to be received, suffered a day to be appointed for its discussion, and then, on the very day before it was to be taken into consideration, he was to start up, and tell the house that many of the petitions which had been received by the House on the subject of elections, while he was in the chair, were improperly received; that now for the first time, he must tell the House so, and that he must insist upon the law which prohibited the House from proceeding on such a petition. He apprehended that such conduct in a person connected with government, would surprise both the House and the public, and yet such was the nature of the present motion; for these reasons he should vote against the present motion.

Mr. *Fonblanque* supported the motion. It only required to look at the petition and at the act, to be convinced that the terms of the statute had not been complied with. This was a question of great importance, both as it respected the parties and as it respected the practice of the House. But the question was, whether by their own discretion, the House were to set aside an act of Parliament. He then read part of the act, and observed, that it was impossible any one could think

that this petition had complied with its demands. If the act was vicious, it might be repealed or altered; but as long as it was an act, it ought to be observed. His learned friend (the Attorney General) had said, that this would be a "monstrous injustice to the parties. It would be, indeed a very great hardship, but it would be better that this hardship should be inflicted, than that an act of Parliament should be infringed upon. His learned friend had said, that the Committee had the power of judging whether anything was wrong in the petition; but he contended this was not the case, as it would by this means be assuming the authority of the house, and might perhaps at last presume to reverse what the House should have adopted. He wondered that precedents were so much relied on, when the act itself was clear and explicit. It had been said, that the form of the petition was not of importance, but who did not know that a "dash of the pen" was of the last consequence in many things. The petitioners might say that they were aggrieved, but they did not state upon their petition the very qualification that proved that they were aggrieved.

Mr. *Jervis* observed, that he was of opinion that the motion ought to be negatived upon these grounds. The object of the act was to prevent the House from being harassed with improper petitions, and stated that none such should be proceeded upon. But the House had received many petitions since, not strictly conformable to this act, and in this very business they had proceeded upon already; and, therefore, the objection to it came too late. He admitted, that had it been urged when the petition was first presented, it could not have been so easily answered. Since this was a motion certainly not very honourable for justice to the individuals, it was only a case of necessity that could compel its adoption. But the objection now was too late, and therefore he gave it his decided negative.

Mr. *Dallas* thought this a case of much importance, and that it ought to be seriously considered. He thought the question as it stood now, was very different from what it would have been if the objection had been made when that petition was presented; for if the House had rejected it then, it would have been competent, and very easy for the party to have presented another petition free from objection, but now that was become impossible, and the injustice of the case would be enormous if the petition was rejected now, for there would be no remedy left. If the reasoning of the hon. gent. who moved this question, was adopted by the

House, it would be telling the people of England that the House by overlooking an act of Parliament which told the house its duty, had deceived a number of petitioners, but there was now no help for it, for on a sudden they had seen their error, and all petitioners who had been governed by their decisions upon this point, could not have their cases stated. He thought the house was not driven by imperious necessity to any such desperation. It might have been desirable, that the petition had been more specifically worded; but he did not think, that the act of Parliament prevented the House from sending this petition before a Committee, for which reason he should vote against the motion.

Mr. *Deverall* said a few words upon the subject of precedent, and observed, there was not one exactly like the present case.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that it had been stated that the words of the act were not of a peremptory or mandatory nature; that it was now too late to state the objection, and it might properly come under the cognizance of the Committee. Had gentlemen, however, perused the words of the act, they must at once have seen how unfounded these observations were. The clause was peremptory and clear. It first declares that no proceedings should be held under the petition, unless the persons by whom it was signed had therein asserted their claim to the right of voting at that election. And secondly, imposes a personal obligation on them, within fourteen days, to enter into the proper recognizances. If such were not entered into, the Speaker was directed to report the same to the house; and on such report, the order for taking the petition into consideration was immediately to be discharged. It was clear that in neither of these cases was the point to go before the Committee for their decision, because no discretion was even left with the house as to those particulars. On the report of the Speaker, that the petitioners had failed to enter into the recognizances required, would it be contended that the House was entitled to exercise a discretionary power? To say that they knew the petitioners' credit to be such that there was no necessity for recognizances being entered into, and that, therefore, the petition might still be entertained? They unquestionably could not. All discretionary power was then gone from them, and the petition must be discharged. The whole question for the consideration of the House at present was, did such words occur in the petition as warranted them, under the enact-

ment of the statute, in entertaining it? It was no answer to say, that they had proceeded for fourteen years, without attending to the statute. Now that the point was brought before them, they were bound to determine it. The only question was as to the words of the petition. He should therefore suggest to the honourable mover to alter his motion, and put in it this form, "Does the petition contain words sufficiently expressive of the requisition in the statute, that the petitioners therein claim to have a right of voting at that election?"

Sir *William Pulteney* said, he agreed with the honourable gentleman who spoke last, that that would be the fair way of stating the question, and if it were so put, he should have no difficulty in saying, that the petition did substantially comply with the act, and upon that ground he should give his vote against the motion. With regard to whether the Committee had a right to discuss this point or not, he should not enter into that consideration at present, but should give his vote upon the ground he had already stated.

Mr. *Fox* expressed his surprise at the extraordinary nature of the arguments adduced on the other side. He was concerned to see so much indifference prevail on a question of so much importance, and that gentlemen had so completely lost sight of the question before them. It was not what was justice to this or that party which they were called on to determine, but, what was the duty incumbent, in such a case on that House. An hon. relation of his (Mr. Grenville) had said, that the intention of the act was to restore to the House the rights which it possessed previous to the statute of the 10th of the King. Whatever might have been the intention of the Legislature in this respect, he maintained, however, that such intention it had not carried into effect. The Legislature had there clearly and explicitly prescribed and laid down to the House, how they were to act, and had invested them with no discretionary powers whatever.—Another hon. and learned gent. had admitted the necessity of some statement, similar to that pointed out in the act, being contained in the petition, but how did he get quit of this? By saying, let it go to the Committee, and be there decided. The Legislature, however, had drawn a clear line of distinction between the duties of that House and of the Committee. To the House it had said, "You shall not proceed on any petition in which the petitioners do not claim a right to vote at the election against

which they petition." To the Committee it had said, "You shall decide on what shall be sent to you by the House." The learned gent. (Attorney General) had characterised the omission as one which might be corrected by a "dash of the pen." This, however, was no answer. There were no omissions or flaws which a greater or smaller "dash of the pen" might not on the same principle supply and rectify. The act clearly pointed out to the House what must be stated to them, before they could proceed in such petitions. Had the petitioners in the present case used words to express such a meaning? No. They had not even stated that they were aggrieved. "Oh," but says an hon. gent. "if they had not been aggrieved, upon what principle can we presume that they would have petitioned?" The act, however, declared, that let their grievances be ever so great, if not described in a particular way, they were not entitled to be heard on them in that House. The decision of the Carmarthen Committee had been referred to, but as he was not acquainted with the grounds of it, he should not express an opinion upon it. He would, however, ask, would that Committee have presumed to find the petition frivolous and vexatious? Had they done so, what would have been the answer of the petitioners? "We never pretended to have any right to vote at this election. We felt ourselves aggrieved indeed as Englishmen, as electors of Middlesex, as electors even of Carmarthen, though not at the time of the election, but we have never in our petition stated any claim to a title to vote at the election petitioned against." This clearly would be a satisfactory answer. The House was unwarranted in entertaining the petition even for a moment. It had been objected that he had not made his motion in sufficient time. He wished he had attended to the objection at the time, and he would most unquestionably have made it. The charge, however, equally applied to every other member of the House. The argument of the hon. gent. was, "You have missed your time, and cannot now take the matter into consideration." Such language might do extremely well among parties. If it were the business of the sitting member to make the objection, this might have been an exceedingly good answer. When made to Parliament, however, it was completely inapplicable. They were called on to consider whether they discharged their duty, if they set aside an act of Parliament merely for the convenience of persons who had neglected to comply with its enactments. What

else were they doing in the present instance? He would defy the best judge of the interpretation of the English language, to point out words more clearly, more imperative and commanding, than those on which his motion was founded. An hon. gent. had charged him with not having even said that he did not believe that the petitioners were not freeholders of Middlesex. He really thought the hon. gent. not serious, when he made this remark. What had the House to do with the fact, whether they were freeholders or not? They had no title to inquire into it. Had the petition been signed by Susan and Mary and a number of names, not one of which, it was evident, could be freeholders or electors, still they were bound to receive the petition, if it described the petitioners in the manner provided by the act. It had been so found for him in a petition presented by the electors of Westminster. In God's name, what could be done under this act, but discharge the petition? The petitioners had not even by innuendo insinuated that they had a right to vote. A person might present a petition saying he was a householder, a freeman, or any other term which he chose to adopt, but it must be impossible for the House to know that such title gave him a right to vote in any particular place for a member of Parliament. If he had stated himself to be an inhabitant, would that have been thought sufficient? Would the House have gone into a question of law, and heard evidence, for the purpose of establishing such a point? The idea was ridiculous; but it must follow, if the enactment of the statute be not adhered to, which requires the petitioners explicitly to describe themselves as having a claim to the right of voting. He regretted that a noble Lord who had been much engaged in election committees (Lord Glenbervie) was not in his place, that the House might have heard his opinion on the subject. If the House negatived his motion he should feel it his duty to apply for a repeal of the act, that they might not have petitions flying in the face of it every day. As to the regret so pathetically expressed by gentlemen, that the petitioners should lose the opportunity of vindicating their rights merely from an accidental circumstance, that had received a very satisfactory answer from the learned serjeant under the gallery, who had pointed out to them how frequently such foreclosures occurred in a court of justice. Notwithstanding the doubt which almost every gentleman had expressed on the subject, he must again declare his conviction, that not the most distant degree of

ambiguity was perceptible to him on the most minute investigation of the act. As to the form, he had no objection to have the question put in the manner suggested by his hon. friend (Mr. Sheridan). The hardship which agreeing to the motion would throw on the people of England, he could not conceive. He had been told that his motion did not deserve favour; it asked none. Were gentlemen to enter into the argument, they would find, that, however harsh the maxim, it would still prevail that *ignorantia legis non excusat*. He then proposed to have the question put as suggested by Mr. Sheridan, when—

The *Speaker* rose and observed, that there was already a question before the House, and until that was disposed of, no one could, consistently with order, be received.

Mr. Fox apologised by saying, he certainly did not mean to propose any such question, without the leave of the House. [Here there was an urgent call of *Question!* *Question!*] Mr. Fox observed, he was well aware that there were many gentlemen who would vote upon this question, who were better inclined to vote for the conclusion of a syllogism, than for the component parts of it; and it was not difficult to divine how they would decide in the present case. This was what was usually termed *Royal voting*. It reminded him of a story of Ptolemy, king of Egypt, who wanted to be extremely learned, without the trouble of much consideration, and upon asking Euclid, or some such *hum drum* fellow, how he might become so, was answered, “that there was no *royal road* to mathematics.” He concluded with expressing his hope, that the House would not, by its decision this night, violate the letter and spirit of an act of Parliament, passed for its own guidance, by assuming a discretionary power of dispensing, in any case, with its positive letter, and obvious spirit and meaning, and thereby create a precedent, which would, to all intents and purposes, annul that act, and open a door to endless litigations. The question being put on Mr. Fox’s original motion; the House divided, Ayes, 24; Noes, 96; Majority 72.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, February 3.

[MINUTES].—The House met this day pursuant to their lordships’ adjournment for the Christmas recess.—Some routine and private business was disposed of.—Several orders were made with respect to the hearing

of and decisions on appeal causes; in the course of which the appeal, *Morthland v. Cadell*, some time depending before their lordships, was ordered to be withdrawn in conformity to the wish of the parties.—Adjourned till Monday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, February 3.

At half-past three o’clock the House met, for the purpose of balloting for two Committees to try the merits of the returns for the county of Middlesex and the borough of Midhurst. About five the gallery was opened. After a considerable time, during which no business took place, Mr. White, appeared at the bar with the following list of members, to try the merits of the Middlesex Election Petitions; viz. Sir W. W. Wynne, Bart.; R. W. Backer, Esq.; Hon. M. G. Stewart, Esq.; C. Cokerell, Esq.; R. S. Ainslie, Esq.; C. S. Hawthorne, Esq.; J. A. Wright, Esq.; Sir D. Carnegie, Bart.; Lord Viscount Marsham; Hon. E. S. Cooper; Lord John Thynne; J. B. Walsh, Esq.; Hon. N. Fellowes, Esq.—The names being read, the Speaker stated to the House that the sitting member having waved his right of appointing a nominee, it was now the duty of the members already chosen to choose a person for this purpose from among the members present, at the time the ballot was made. The members accordingly withdrew, and in a few minutes after returned with the names of Isaac Hawkins Browne, Esq.; and Nicholson Calvert, Esq. as the nominees for the two parties. The Committee were then sworn at the table and ordered forthwith to proceed with their investigations.—Mr. Dickens appeared at the bar from the Chief Secretary’s Office of Ireland, and presented the 29th report of the commissioners for investigating the state of the Irish accounts. It was ordered to lie on the table.—The Committees of Ways and Means and of Supply were deferred till Monday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Saturday, February 4.

The House met at the usual hour, and proceeded to ballot for a Committee to try the merits of a petition complaining of an undue election for the borough of Midhurst, when the following gentlemen were chosen; Right Hon. T. Grenville; Right Hon. J. Smith; Lord H. S. Manners; Earl Temple; Lord W. Townsend; W. Clive, Esq.; J.

Blackburn, Esq.; Hon. G. Watson; Right Hon. N. Bond; A. Strahan, Esq.; E. B. Portman, Esq.; Sir M. Foulkes; and A. S. John, Esq.—Nominees, B. Hobhouse, and W. Dickinson, jun. Esqrs.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, February 6.

The Bishop of Leighlin and Ferris took the oaths and his seat. The Lord Chancellor moved, that owing to the indisposition of Wm. Rose, Esq. one of the clerks at the table of the House, J. Berkeley, Esq. be in the mean time appointed to officiate in his room. Ordered.—The writ of error, *Lucena* against Crawford, was postponed.—One or two private bills were forwarded in their stages. Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, February 6.

[MINUTES.]—The Solicitor General obtained leave to bring in a bill to explain and amend an act passed in the 14th of his present Majesty, the object of which was to explain and amend an act passed in the 10th of Anne, for regulating the mode of selling interest on direct or collateral securities.—Mr. D. Parker Coke presented a petition from the insolvent debtors of Nottingham, praying relief. It was ordered to lie on the table.—Mr. T. Grenville reported from the Committee appointed to try the merits of the petition against the return for Midhurst, that the committee found E. Turner, Esq. the sitting member to be duly elected, and the petition against his return frivolous and vexatious.—The Attorney General introduced a bill for indemnifying all such persons as have been concerned in carrying into effect an order of council, allowing the exportation of a certain quantity of seed corn to Portugal. The bill was read a first time, and ordered for a second reading to-morrow.—Mr. Corry moved for a variety of accounts relative to the finances, the manufactures and the commerce of Ireland. Among the most important were, accounts of the ordinary and extraordinary sources of Irish revenue; the arrears and balances in the hands of the commissioners of the treasury; the value of the imports and exports, distinguishing articles of Irish produce; the number of vessels which have cleared out of the ports of Ireland, with the amount of their tonnage, and the number of seamen and boys, by whom they were navigated; an

account of the Irish public funded and unfunded debt; an account of the money voted for the service of last year which remains unexpended; an account of the application of 650,000*l.* voted for the extraordinary services of the army; an account of the application of 166,000*l.* voted for secret purposes. All the accounts to be made up from the 5th of January 1803, to the same period in 1804. These, with a number of other accounts of inferior importance, were ordered.

[BARRACKS.]—Mr. Calcraft wished to know whether estimates of the expenses of the barrack department were meant to be laid before the House. He thought this a subject of the first importance, and highly worthy of investigation.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer professed his readiness to grant every paper which could put the House in possession of the fullest information on the subject.

The Secretary at War stated, that the papers alluded to, were prepared, and would be produced as they were regularly moved for.—On the suggestion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the papers were ordered to be produced.—The other orders being disposed of, the House adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, February 7.

[MINUTES.]—Mr. Adam was heard as counsel, and evidence was adduced, for the claimant in the Zouche peerage. The farther consideration was deferred till this day se'nnight.—The annual account of the proceedings of the commissioners for paying off the national debt was brought up, and ordered to lie on the table.—The Scotch appeal, *Napier v. Napier*, was allowed to be withdrawn by mutual consent.

[QUEEN ANNE'S ANNUITIES.]—The Earl of Suffolk, advertng to a subject which he touched on last Session of Parliament, wished to know in what manner certain annuities granted in the reign of Queen Anne, amounting to upwards of 46,000*l.* arising from a capital of 877,000*l.* which had fallen in during the present year, and a sum of about a million of capital which would fall in, in the course of next year, were to be applied.

Lord Hawkesbury said, that in the annual accounts laid before the House the sums alluded to by the noble earl would undoubtedly be accounted for, and the mode of their appropriation pointed out.

[VOLUNTEERS.]—The Earl of *Suffolk* confessed himself satisfied on this head, but said there was another point of great importance, to which he wished to call the attention of the House. The subject he alluded to was the volunteers. He should now merely touch on the point, as the decision of the court of King's Bench of yesterday had rendered it unnecessary for him to take the ground which, in the event of a contrary judgment, he should have found himself called on to occupy. He felt no hesitation in giving it as his opinion, that, in the event of a contrary decision, every volunteer in the kingdom would have retired in disgust. He intended, in that event, to have submitted a motion to the consideration of the House, which he should now read. As his lordship was proceeding to read the motion, he was called to order by

Lord *Walsingham*, who objected to any motion being read which was not properly before the House.

The Earl of *Suffolk* asserted his right to make any motion which he might thing consistent with the discharge of his duty.

The Lord *Chancellor* also spoke to order. The noble earl, as he understood him, had only stated, that if an event had not taken place, he intended to have submitted his motion to the House. In this view of the case, Lord *Walsingham* was correct in objecting to its being read. If, however, it was the noble earl's intention to submit it to the House, he was clearly entitled so to do.

The Earl of *Suffolk* said, that it surely was his intention to submit his motion to the consideration of their Lordships, though, on account of the decision to which he had alluded, he should abstain from the remarks he must otherwise have made. He concluded, by moving, that a committee of naval and military officers, Members of this House, be appointed to advise with government respecting the volunteers, and to recommend such measures as they may think advisable for rendering them most serviceable and efficient.

Lord *Hawkesbury* could not think the motion of the noble earl exactly well timed. He could not be ignorant that the servants of government had pledged themselves immediately to bring the question of the volunteer system before Parliament. Whatever, therefore, the noble earl had to propose on that subject, he would then have an opportunity of bringing forward. As all questions, however, of this nature were supposed to originate in his Majesty's mi-

nisters, it was but fair, in the first place, to allow them an opportunity of declaring their ideas on the subject, and of seeing how far those ideas met the general sentiment. That ministers had consulted the most skilful and celebrated commanders in this country, was a fact. The assembling a council, however consisting of such men, would, he conceived, be inexpedient, unparliamentary, and impracticable. Persons of this description were, in the present situation of the country scattered up and down, engaged in remote but necessary service. Supposing, therefore, that the measure were parliamentary, and that it were practicable, would it be prudent and expedient, at such a moment, to enter into the measure proposed by the noble earl?

The Earl of *Suffolk* said, that it consisted with his knowledge, that in the corps with which he was connected, had it not been for the decision to which he had alluded, every man in the corps, both officer and private, would have thrown down their arms. It was the duty of government to conciliate the volunteers, not to disgust them. Had the measure which he now proposed been at once adopted, the explanatory bill, alluded to by the noble lord, would have been rendered unnecessary.—He had not proposed a general council of military officers, but one composed of members of that House, who might have been called together without inconvenience. It had been said, that great military characters had been consulted. He could however say, that many of the first military characters in the country, with whom he was acquainted, had not been consulted on the subject.—The motion was put and negatived without a division.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, February 7.

This day a ballot was appointed to take place for a Committee to try the merits of the petition respecting the late election for Southwark; and also a ballot for another Election Committee; but at four o'clock only 98 members were in the House, and it being necessary, according to order, that 100 members should be present before any ballot could commence, the House adjourned till to-morrow.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, February 8.

The Scotch appeal, *Graham v. Weir*
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which stood for hearing this day, was, on the motion of the Lord Chancellor, postponed till Friday next.—Several accounts and documents were presented from the Commissioners of the Customs, which principally respected the wine trade with Portugal; certain parts of the East-India trade; and the number of vessels employed in the Russia trade, &c. which were ordered to lie on the table.—After a few observations, in an under-tone of voice, were interchanged between the Lord Chancellor, the Duke of Norfolk, and Lord Walsingham, the evidence given before the Committee of Privileges relative to the claim to the Zouch Peerage, was ordered to be printed for the use of their lordships.—Some private business was then disposed of, after which the House adjourned till Friday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, February 8.

[MINUTES.]—Before the gallery was opened, we understand that Sir John William Anderson presented a petition from Messrs. Boydells, which he prefaced by observing, that the exertions of those gentlemen had tended in the greatest degree, to encourage the arts in this country. Before they undertook an extensive and liberal speculation connected with that subject, scarcely any other prints worth looking at were to be seen but French prints, imported here; but through the means of their efforts, the graphic productions of this country had obtained an extensive circulation upon the Continent, as well as they had deservedly attained a decided superiority at home. Unfortunately, however, the French revolution, that curse upon the human race, had in a great measure put a stop to the circulation upon the Continent of those productions. The Messrs. Boydells it was almost needless to state, were highly honourable men. Mr. John Boydell was a member of the court of aldermen, and had served the offices of sheriff and lord mayor of the city of London; he was now at the advanced age of 85, and wished to be enabled to lay his head upon his pillow with the conscious satisfaction of having discharged all the demands of his creditors. The prayer of the petition was, that leave might be given to bring in a bill to enable Messrs. Boydells to dispose of their magnificent collection of prints by way of lottery. The petition was received without opposition, and ordered to be referred to a Committee to report their opinion thereon to the House.

—The House proceeded to ballot for two Committees, to try the merits of the petitions complaining of undue elections at Southwark and Durham, when the following members were chosen to try the Southwark petition: Wm. Burroughs, Esq.; R. Holt Lee, Esq.; James Buller, of West Looe, Esq.; G. P. Moore, Esq.; Sir Wm. Paxton; James Porter, Esq.; John Palmer, Esq.; C. Chaplin, Esq.; James Traile, Esq.; James Farquhar, Esq.; D. North, Esq.; Hon. G. Lowry Cole; John Baker, Esq.—The *Speaker* then stated that the petitioner having waived his right of appointing a nominee out of the members present at the time of the ballot, he observed that the Act of Parliament made no provision for the case of two Committees being appointed for the same day, for there was no clause forbidding the members, in chusing a nominee, to fix upon a member who might be drawn upon the other Committee, which would certainly be productive of great inconvenience.—The members then withdrew and chose D. P. Coke, Esq. The nominee for the sitting member is T. B. Bernard, Esq.—The members chosen to form the Durham Committee were: T. D. Lambe, Esq.; C. Mills, Esq.; Right Hon. Thomas Steele; Right Hon. Lord G. Thynne; Theophilus Metcalfe, Esq.; W. S. Stanhope, Esq.; R. Archdale, Esq.; Sir M. Le Fleming; J. Langham, Esq.; H. Sibthorpe, Esq.; Geo. Anth. Le Keck, Esq.; John Dent, Esq.; honourable George Cranfield Berkeley, &c. Nominees. J. Raine, Esq.; Lord Dunslow.—The commissioners for the reduction of the national debt, brought up their annual account for the year ending the 31st January 1804. Ordered to lie on the table. Mr. Secretary Yorke moved, that there be laid before the House, an account of the different sub-division muster rolls throughout the kingdom. Ordered.—Petitions were presented from the prisoners confined for debt in the gaols of Maidstone and Aylesbury, praying for relief. Ordered to lie on the table. The Sheriffs of London appeared at the bar, with petitions from the aldermen, &c. of the city of London, praying, that the powers granted by former acts be enlarged, for raising a further sum of money for improving the port of London, and for widening the entrance into the city by Temple Bar. The petitions were referred to a Committee.—The Duke of York's Estate Bill, and the Portugal Corn Indemnity Bill, were read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.—The Secretary at War brought up the estimate of the barrack department for 1804. Ordered to be printed.

[CONDUCT OF GENERAL FOX.]—Admiral *Berkeley*.—Sir, it is not at present my intention to press the motion of which I gave notice before the recess, for the production of certain papers respecting the insurrection in Dublin on the 23d of July last, and the conduct of the Irish government upon that emergency. The principal object of the motion of which I formerly gave notice, was to throw as much light as possible on the conduct of an hon. relative of mine (General Fox) upon that occasion, as I had conceived that some expressions which were made use of by some right hon. members of this House, implied a strong reflection on the character of that gallant officer. As I am now, however, given to understand, that those who made use of the expressions to which I allude, expressly disavow any intention of criminating that brave and meritorious officer, I feel it no longer necessary to press the motion of which I formerly gave notice.

Mr. *Secretary Yorke*.—Sir, although it is, perhaps, not strictly regular in me to offer any observations upon the hon. member's choosing to withdraw his motion, yet I must say I am extremely glad, that, upon consideration, he has thought proper to pursue this course; and it gives me the more pleasure, as I feel perfectly convinced that it never could have been the intention of his Majesty's ministers, and I am sure it was never my intention, in any manner to criminate that gallant officer, whose merit and whose services we are very willing to acknowledge.

Sir *John Wrottesley*.—Sir, it gives me much pleasure to hear from one of his Majesty's ministers so honourable a testimony of the merit of the gallant officer who has devoted his life to the interests of his country; but when I consider the circumstances attending the late rebellion in Ireland, I cannot but feel convinced, that there must have been in some quarter the grossest negligence and inattention; it therefore appears to me, that the House would not act consistent with the public duty, in suffering this business to rest here without further examination. I therefore give notice, that on Monday se'nnight, I shall move for the production of certain papers, which I conceive necessary for the information of the House upon this subject.

[VOLUNTEER CONSOLIDATION BILL.]—

Mr. *Secretary Yorke*, agreeable to his notice on a former day, rose to move for leave to bring in a bill for consolidating and explaining the existing acts for the regulation of the

volunteer establishment. The right hon. gent. prefaced his motion by a speech to the following purport: Sir, although what may be conceived to be necessary in opening the measure with which it is my intention to conclude, might easily be confined within a very small compass, yet as the subject, generally, is one of the greatest interest, and has been the object of long expectation, I hope I shall be indulged by the House in going into considerable detail. I shall preface my remarks, Sir, by expressing a hope, that the subject will be considered with the utmost coolness and impartiality. When the defence of the country is the matter under discussion, it is not presuming too much to entertain the hope, that party spirit will not enter into our deliberations, that we shall only think of the most effectual means of resisting that enemy who menaces the destruction of all that is dear to us as the inhabitants of a free country. I hope I do not carry my expectation too far, when I express a hope that gentlemen will not shew themselves inclined to increase that clamour which has been raised against the volunteer system, for what reason I know not, by a certain description of persons, who do not wish well to the country, and whose last resource of malignity is to set the government against the volunteers, and the volunteers against the government. Against such persons, if such persons exist, I wish more particularly to guard the volunteers as the worst enemies of their establishment, and the most dangerous foes of their country. I am anxious also, Sir, that gentlemen should view the volunteer system not only in its defects, its difficulties, or its inconveniences. It is at least fair to contemplate the system as a whole, and not to hold forth individual instances of difficulty and inconvenience, as arguments against an establishment especially connected with the safety of the empire at a most perilous crisis.—On the present occasion it is not my object to introduce any thing very new, pointed, or extraordinary. From experience it must have been obvious, that measures dictated by temperance and moderation were those which it was most prudent to adopt and pursue. Whatever are the measures of improvement to be adopted, they must be such as are suggested by imperious necessity, and such as are essential to the correction, not merely of incidental abuses, but of the radical deficiencies of a general system.—Having made these preliminary observations, I will now proceed to the substantial considerations on which my motion is to be founded. Before, however, I go into the detail of the circumstances

which prove the necessity of a new bill for the purpose of explaining and amending the laws for the regulation of the volunteer institution, it will not be improper to say a few words respecting the use and purposes of such an institution, the history of its original formation, the actual circumstances in which it is now placed, the inconveniences which are admitted to exist, and others which, though held out as inconveniences, could not be proved such in point of law and of fact. While I enter on these topics, it is of course, at the same time, my object to point out the remedies which appear most applicable to existing defects, and the improvements which are conceived to be the most adapted to complete the perfection of an establishment at all times useful, but more peculiarly important at a crisis when the fate of the whole empire is involved. These remedies are to be obtained, and these improvements are to be effected, by a very simple process. They are such remedies as depend on the implied prerogative of the sovereign, or they are such improvements as are fully within the reach of the legislature. As to the nature and purposes of the volunteer establishment, it will not be necessary for me to take up much of the time of the House. It is hardly necessary for me to advert to the present situation of the country, to the present enormous aggrandisement of French power, contrasted with the humiliated condition of the rest of the continent of Europe. Even with reference to a defensive system, it will not, I believe, be contended by any gentleman, that a larger additional military force is not necessary than in any former period of our history. Great and powerful as our navy now is, it would be improvident and criminal in the highest degree, to trust to the exertions of our sailors the defence of the United Kingdom. We have to consider the immensity of coast which was to be guarded. This was an extent of no less than 2,500 miles; and with such a compass of territory to protect, it behoved us to use all those means of protection which were placed in our hands. While I admit that the navy of this country, however powerful and victorious as it has long been, is not adequate to the protection of our coasts against a most inveterate enemy; it is, at the same time, necessary to declare, that we have not the means of keeping up such a regular army as can at all secure the protection of Great Britain and Ireland against the menaced invasion of a most formidable power. In a military point of view, perhaps, the regular force of the country could, under particular arrangements, and by the

observance of the most rigid economy, be augmented to a certain extent. I do not, however, think, that the regular force, now amounting to about ninety-thousand, could be augmented to any very considerable amount, if any regard was to be paid either to views of constitutional liberty, or any considerations of financial resources. Deficiencies in our regular military establishment may and will be filled up, but the augmentation to our regular standing force, cannot be expected to be of such a nature as to weigh much in the scale. At present, the militia of Ireland amounted to 18,000, and during the late war, they were more numerous by nearly 2,000. With respect to this part of the national establishment in that part of the United Kingdom, I certainly can entertain no wish of any augmentation. On the other hand, a large proportion of the regular army from this country, is necessary for the protection of this part of the empire, against intestine commotion or foreign attack. Under these circumstances, Sir, it became a matter of policy, as well as of necessity, to call on the services of that proportion of the people who were able to carry arms, and submit to the labours of military discipline. These services have been required by the acts passed in the last session of Parliament. The principle of the acts then passed was, that a great proportion of the population should be trained to the use of arms, and that their discipline should be accomplished at the least possible expense to the state. I need not remind the House that the principle of the volunteer establishment is far from being novel in its nature. It was a principle first introduced during the Shelbourne administration, near the close of the American war. It was revived in 1794, from the circumstances in which the country was then placed. From that period it has continued in full activity, and was then made the subject of legislative enactment. At that period it was acknowledged as a part of a new system arising out of the new circumstances of the country, and the idea of exemptions was considered to be essential to its existence. Under this original voluntary establishment, where there was very little legislative enactment, but where almost every thing was left to the corps themselves, except in cases where actual service might be required, the number of volunteers throughout the kingdom was not below one hundred and fifty thousand. It was not then judged expedient to control those bodies by many positive enactments, and the consequence had been, that under these

circumstances the beneficial consequences of such institutions had been materially experienced. So much, indeed, was Parliament convinced of this, that thanks had been voted to the different volunteer bodies throughout the kingdom, for the services they had rendered their country. On the conclusion of the peace the House and the public were so well convinced of the excellence of the volunteer establishment, that it was judged politic to encourage its perpetuity by continuing, though on a more limited scale, the exemptions formerly granted to those who had stood forward in defence of the country, at a crisis of peculiar danger. For this purpose the act of the 42d of his Majesty was passed, and in chap. 46 of that act, the object to which I have now adverted, was described. The object of this act of the legislature was to hold out to the yeomanry at large, and to the volunteer infantry in all the large towns throughout the kingdom, to continue their services even during peace, and by such an arrangement it was meant that the necessity of a very large standing army would be avoided. When the war broke out, an immediate necessity of extraordinary means of protection was experienced, and the voluntary spirit of the country manifested itself in a way equally honourable to the national character, and the individuals by whom this spirit was displayed. All ranks were sensible that the situation of the country, critical from the particular circumstances of Europe, was rendered still more critical from the intrigues and designs of an individual equally formidable, from his enterprising and ferocious views. A new act of parliament became necessary, to regulate the mode in which these offers of voluntary service were to be received and applied, in the way most applicable to the public service. It was necessary that his Majesty should revert to his ancient and undoubted prerogative to call out his subjects for the protection of his throne, and the general defence of the empire. The act of the 43d of his Majesty was framed for this general end; and in the 96th chap. are contained the terms under which voluntary was to be preferred to compulsory service, and explaining the exemptions which those offering such service were to enjoy. Under this act, voluntary offers to the amount of 400,000 men were received. By an abstract of the returns under the General Training Act, distinguishing offers of voluntary services from registers of those who were liable to serve, I find that the number of volunteers under the first class was not less than 420,000, while the whole number

liable to serve did not exceed 500,000. In consequence of this display of the national spirit, the compulsory clauses of the 43rd of his Majesty were suspended. The number of volunteers, speaking in round numbers, was now upwards of 350,000, and thus the intention of the legislature was fulfilled. When I speak of the volunteer establishment here, I have no reference to Ireland. The system there differs in several important circumstances. During the last war the volunteers of that part of the united kingdom shewed what valour and discipline could effect, and the principle of their establishment was not in want of any alteration. I think that the House must agree with me in thinking, that the Irish volunteers have already done themselves the highest honour; and it is only to be hoped, and I trust such a hope is not at all unreasonable, that their example may animate those who have enrolled themselves here for the defence of their country to show a similar spirit in the moment of danger. I have already stated, that the volunteers of this part of the empire were upwards of 350,000, a number under proper regulations fully adequate in co-operation with our regular force, to put the country out of all danger, a number not restricted, till it had amounted to three-fourths of the first class liable to be called out under the General Training Act.—Having thus briefly noticed the history and numbers of the volunteer establishment, let me next direct your attention to their present situation. With respect to a late decision, as to the right which a volunteer has to withdraw from a corps to which he has attached himself, I shall at present offer a very few observations. In the decision then given, the court certainly differed from the opinion given on the subject by an hon. friend of mine, and even now I am not altogether convinced that he had not as a lawyer good ground for the opinion which he then offered. His opinion, it must be allowed, was only a legal deduction from a review of the different acts of parliament on the subject of the volunteer establishment, and no notice was taken of the particular circumstances under which these acts were passed by the legislature. I am free decidedly to declare, that no such legal inference was meant to be drawn from these acts. I have no idea whatever that it was the meaning of Parliament in the framing of these acts, to preclude the right of volunteers to resign under particular circumstances. I am sure that no idea to the contrary was ever held forth in the course of the discussion

which took place, to countenance an opposite opinion; and there remains no doubt in my mind, that the right of a volunteer to resign was clearly understood. I was particularly anxious to state the distinction between voluntary and compulsory service, and to mark out the material circumstances which essentially characterized their application. The idea of preventing the liberty of resignation never appeared to me either politic or necessary. This opinion is founded on a very simple principle, that, on the well-disposed, any attempt at coercion must only produce dissatisfaction and disgust; and the same zeal which originally determined men to stand forward in a great cause, was the best security against their deserting it, when their obligations to service were, instead of being diminished, materially increased. Coercion is, in all cases, as much as possible, to be avoided in a free country; and coercion to men who deserved so much of their country, was what his Majesty's ministers were most anxious to avoid. We accepted voluntary offers of service as far superior to compulsory labours; but, if contrary to all expectation and probability, the right of resignation once admitted, should be improperly abused, his Majesty's power of calling for the services of individuals acting in this way would revert, and all who had thought proper to decline voluntary service, once offered, would be forced to learn the use of arms under the respective classes to which they belonged.—It has, Sir, been objected to the volunteer system, that the exemptions are so extensive as to be extremely onerous to that part of the community, which has not the means of being connected with any volunteer association. Here I cannot help observing, that on the subject of exemptions the greatest misconception has prevailed. It is not true, Sir, that members of the volunteer corps are exempted from the ballot. It was expressly provided by the law, as it now stood, that the names of all volunteers should be given in to those who were to prepare the lists for the different ballots in the different counties of the kingdom. If they were drawn, they were exempted only in case of their producing satisfactory evidence of their attending the number of drills necessary to grant legal exemption. To my great surprise, I find that this plain requisition of the law has not been complied with in a variety of instances. These observations I apply only to the militia ballots. The ballots for the army of reserve are conducted on a footing altogether different, and on this subject the law is so clear as to require no additional

explanation.—Let me now, Sir, shortly speak to some of the most striking defects and inconveniences of the volunteer system. It may be admitted generally that the volunteer system has in its constitution some defects which are inherent and incurable, while others are such as admit of an easy and efficacious remedy. It will be allowed, among the defects inherent in the volunteer establishment, that it does not admit of as great a degree of discipline as can be obtained in a regularly organized army. That man must be grossly ignorant of the nature of voluntary service who could for a moment suppose that it could be made equal to a regular standing army or the militia, or that it could be regarded in the same light. As great a degree of discipline as possible was to be obtained, but after that object was accomplished it was neither wise nor politic to attempt to press the completion of discipline to a degree inconsistent with the ordinary occupations of those individuals, who from the most honourable and patriotic motives have stood forward with the offer of their lives and fortunes for the defence of the empire. Deficiency of discipline, therefore, to a certain extent, was, in this view of the system, to be expected, and it was not to the remedy of such a defect that the bill which he meant to introduce was at all designed to apply. This was an inconvenience which legislative provisions could not remedy, and which indeed would not be severely felt; if other evils to which remedies were applicable, were removed the one to which I have alluded will be felt of less importance. A good deal has been objected to on the score of the powers exercised by the committees in certain volunteer corps. I have taken some pains to enquire into this subject, and the result of my investigations has been, that in particular instances such committees may have exercised improper powers. In general, however, I have found that these committees were merely instituted for the management of the pecuniary concerns of the corps to which they respectively belonged. Let any person attend, Sir, to the manner in which many volunteer corps have been formed; let him consider, that the greater part of the expense attendant on their establishment has been defrayed by voluntary contribution, and he will have no difficulty in admitting that committees of the nature which I have described are not only liable to no animadversion, but are to a certain degree absolutely necessary. Of this I have no sort of hesitation in declaring my opinion, that beyond the management of pecuniary concerns they ought to have no control; and that if they

attempt in the smallest degree to interfere with the military concerns of the corps, they are doing what is quite unjustifiable, and what cannot be permitted. Against such practices the legislature must directly set its face, and to prevent its continuance is an object of the highest importance.—The right of electing officers in volunteer corps is another subject to which, on the present occasion, I wish to call the attention of the House. I wish here clearly to state, that there is a very great distinction betwixt the election of officers by a volunteer corps previous to its being regularly embodied, and the supposed right of filling up vacancies among the officers as often, by a variety of circumstances, as they may take place. In the one case, it may appear expedient to suffer the exercise of a certain degree of discretion, from an idea that the choice will fall on those individuals who are the best fitted to hold the rank of officers, or who may be supposed to be most esteemed by those by whom they are selected to be their commanders. This, Sir, is only, however, a permission given, and not a right conferred, and in the instance of a vacancy occurring, it never was meant that volunteer corps should exercise the right of choosing their own officers. There is not a single tittle in any act of parliament to justify such a claim; and it is a claim inconsistent with the exercise of his Majesty's lawful prerogative. It is a wise principle of the constitution, that the exercise of the prerogative shall not be usurped where it is not limited by an act of the legislature, and there is no act of the legislature which authorizes volunteer corps to fill up vacancies among their officers. If a particular body of men have supposed themselves in possession of such a right, they must be convinced of their error. The exercise of such a right I have no difficulty in pronouncing illegal; and I have not less hesitation in saying, that in almost every instance, it would be highly impolitic and dangerous. The commandant of a volunteer corps is, in the case of a vacancy, to send in a list of those whom he conceives best qualified to supply it, to the lord lieutenant of the county. The lord lieutenant is invested with the full power of either transmitting or withholding that list, according to his own discretion; and the Secretary of State may lay it before his Majesty or not, precisely according to his opinion of the character and respectability of the persons who are recommended to fill up the vacancy which has occurred. If any corps chose to insist on this right, it is the fair right of his Majesty to discontinue their services; and I am so fully convinced of this

right, that I consider it unnecessary to make it a part of the bill which it is my object to introduce. It may perhaps be said, Sir, that the right of volunteer corps to elect their own officers has in a variety of cases been admitted, and that many of the oldest corps have hitherto exercised this right without any attempt to deny the fairness of their claims. I do not deny that in some old corps there was an implied agreement with the government at that time, that such a right was to be exercised; but, with regard to all the corps formed since the war, I maintain expressly, that no such agreement beyond the first election of officers, was ever in the contemplation of his Majesty's ministers, or was ever held forth as an inducement to increase the voluntary offers of service from any part of the community. On this point, I have at present no further observation to offer. It has been further contended against the volunteer system, that, as it now stands, it is not sufficiently efficacious for insuring regularity of attendance and proper behaviour during the periods allotted to discipline. Without pretending altogether to deny the justice of this observation, let me be permitted to observe, that this inconvenience can, consistently with the volunteer system only be remedied effectually by two measures.—The one of these measures is, the power vested in the commandants of volunteer corps, of discharging those who are negligent in the performance of their duty. In this case, those so discharged would be immediately liable to the ballot, both for the militia and the army of reserve. The other check on irregularity of attendance and remissness of discipline is, that persons so offending, besides being liable to discharge from their respective corps, will immediately be liable to be called out in their respective class, and compelled to undergo all the labours to which, by the general training act, all those able to carry arms are to be subject. I have already allowed, that there are some defects in the volunteer system which are inherent, while others are level to remedy. The question then is, whether we shall adhere to this system, with all its defects, at so critical a period as that in which we are placed, or resort to another, which, though in some respects more perfect, is in others far more liable to objection, and infinitely less adapted to the circumstances in which we are inclined to act. It always has appeared to me, that wise men best shew that wisdom, by adopting not what may be absolutely the best in the particular circumstances, but what is the best in the particular situation where they are called on to repel

formidable danger. When a system is allowed to contain the materials of excellent regulation, it is surely much better to improve it than to reject it wholly for an experiment, which, though in its aspect captivating, may lead only to disgrace and disappointment. It is better to go on temperately and coolly, than by rashness to overturn a system, capable of the most useful ends and the highest purposes.—Now, Sir, let me say a few words as to the remedies proposed to be applied to the volunteer establishment. In the first place, it will not be denied, that if any individuals, or any officers in a volunteer corps be deficient in their duty, his Majesty has the full right of discontinuing their services, and that too with circumstances of disgrace. If the number of persons so dismissed was considerable, then his Majesty had full powers to call them out under their respective classes, and to compel them to learn the use of arms to prepare them to defend the country in case of actual invasion.—After such training they may be sent either to reinforce the regular army, the militia, or in any other way which his Majesty, by the advice of ministers, may choose to appoint. They may even be sent to fill up the ranks of those volunteer corps from which, under particular circumstances, they may have withdrawn. As to the military commissers, to which I have already alluded, it will only be necessary for me to say, that if they presume to exercise illegal powers, or attempt to conceal the proceedings of the commandant, they must necessarily be suspended. I can hardly suppose that any corps would support them in any such irregularity; but if, contrary to all expectation, they should be guilty of such improper conduct, the inference is obvious. They thereby declare themselves unfit to support the character they have assumed, and must submit to have their services discontinued.—I have now finished my general observations, and have only to conclude with a few more particular remarks. The object of the bill, as I intimated in my first notice, is to consolidate all the acts for the regulation of the volunteer system. These acts are three in number, and though they differ very little in spirit or substance, it is of importance that they should appear in a form more precise than they now possess, and that their exact meaning should be understood with as little inconvenience as possible. As to the exemptions, it is my wish that several important alterations should be introduced. As the law now stands, a certain description of volunteers are exempted from the ballot of the militia by five days

attendance at drill. As to the army of reserve, it stands on a different arrangement. Volunteers are not exempt from the ballot in this case, but if drawn they are exempted from actual service, provided they have attended 24 drills in the year, or a proportionate number before the time of their being drawn to serve. It is meant by this new bill that the time, entitling to exemption, shall be equalized, and that none can claim exemption from the militia who have not been drilled 24 times in the year. I mean, Sir, to propose, that every member of a volunteer corps shall be at liberty to resign at his option; and I think it proper to add, that this was a determination formed without any reference to the late decision of a law court on this subject. It is the object of the bill, that all volunteers shall be subject to the ballot both for the militia and army of reserve. A list of those actually serving in volunteer corps, and who have certificates of regular attendance, is to be separately preserved. When a member is either discharged, or chooses to quit a volunteer corps, then his name is to be returned to the clerks who prepare the county lists, and from that time he is liable to supply any vacancy which may occur. Another object of the bill will be to simplify the returns of effective force, and to point out the manner in which resignation is to take place. When a member thinks proper to resign, he is to give due notice to the commandant of his corps, and is at the same time to deliver up his arms, accoutrements, or whatever other articles he may have received, either by private subscription or at the public expense, in as good case as they received them. By such a step, it will be understood, that they not only subject themselves to the regular ballot, but also place themselves at the disposal of his Majesty, to be employed in whatever way he pleases, either in defeating external invasion, or putting down internal insurrection. There are minor points in the bill which I need not now explain, as they will be better comprehended when it is regularly before the House. I trust there will be no objection to the introduction of the bill in the first instance, and that gentlemen will reserve their arguments till they have the subject fairly before them. I have stated that a power of resignation will be given to volunteers, but from this option I fear no dangerous consequences. Surely, Sir, those who in August and September last stepped forward to defend their country, threatened by an implacable foe, will not shew less zeal now that the enemy's preparations are still

further advanced, or rather nearly completed, and that he only waits the favourable moment to land on our shores. I am confident that they are now as much as ever alive to the calls of patriotism, of duty, and of honour; and that they will not desert their King and their country at this great crisis. Even those, whom circumstances may oblige to withdraw from regular attendance, will in the hour of danger, rally round the standard of freedom, and expire in the same grave which swallows up the liberties and independence of their country.—Having now finished the observations which I thought it incumbent upon me to make; previous to the introduction of this bill, I shall now conclude by moving, that “leave be given to bring in a bill to explain, amend, and consolidate, the provisions contained in the several Acts relative to Yeomanry and Volunteer Corps throughout the United Kingdom.”

Mr. *Sheridan* expressed his regret, that the opinion which he held respecting the right of electing officers belonging to volunteer corps, should be misunderstood by the right hon. gent. who had just sat down, for he entirely agreed with that right hon. gent. that no such right existed in any corps in whose original offer of service such a right was not expressly demanded and acceded to by government; and he also agreed that any corps, claiming any such privilege of electing their own officers, under different circumstances, misunderstood their rights and their duties; but if it was meant that the recommendation of an officer by any corps was not to be attended to, he wished to know where they who would reject such recommendation would desire the power of appointing such officer to rest? would they wish the commission to originate in the crown, in the lord lieutenant, or the deputy lieutenants of counties? Or could it be seriously supposed, that any or either of those arrangements would be preferable to that which the volunteer corps, in general, desired, and which must tend to render them more effective, by the mutual attachment which must subsist between them and officers of their own choice? The right hon. gent. had observed, that the recommendation of officers should properly belong to the lord lieutenants, but that he, from his situation, should feel himself bound to advise his Majesty not to attend to such recommendation, if the person recommended should appear to him to be ineligible, and he would be glad to know whether the right hon. gentleman's exercise of the same discretion would not be sufficient to prevent the ap-

pointment of any officer recommended by a volunteer corps? If so, then, what danger could arise from allowing things to remain on the same footing as they have been, and instead of the lord lieutenants recommending, &c. leaving to the volunteers themselves the right of recommendation? He adopted the word recommendation, because it seemed to be more agreeable to the right hon. gent. than the word election, although there was no material difference between the two.—The right hon. gent. had drawn a distinction between the right which a volunteer corps might have at its original formation, and after it had been actually established. With the inference which was attempted to be made from that distinction, he most decidedly differed, for he never would assent to the opinion, that because no express covenant was entered into between a volunteer corps and government, that such corps should not have the right of electing or recommending its own officers, that such right should not be allowed to them, although, according to its original constitution, the members understood that this privilege belonged to them. Of any attempt of this nature, which would go to evade an implied compact, he would highly disapprove. It would be quibbling with the judgment, it would be breaking faith with the engagements of a gallant body of men, who were intitled to the most respectful attention, the most honourable dealing; whose zeal in the public cause, if any thing could damp, might be affected considerably, by any departure on the part of government from the terms upon which they understood themselves to have originally taken up arms. The utmost faith, he repeated, ought to be observed towards the volunteers, particularly in such instances as those he had alluded to. If, at the time, the offer of any volunteer corps had been accepted by government, no notice was taken of such a distinction as that which the right hon. gent. had insisted upon this evening, where, he wished to know, was to be found the law to justify, the right to authorise, that any such distinction should be afterwards acted upon:—The same check as to the right hon. gentleman's advice to his Majesty, respecting any recommendation to a commission, existed as well at the first formation of the volunteers as at present, but neither then nor now, did there exist any right to prevent that recommendation from being offered. In the former instance, indeed, it was not pretended that it did, and in either case it did not appear to him very prudent or necessary to press such a prohibition. If, however, in the first instance, go-

vernment had refused to any volunteer corps the power of electing its own officers, then such corps might have withdrawn its offer of service, and there would have been no apparent injustice; but if after such corps had been actually formed and made considerable progress to, if not really become perfect in discipline, it should be attempted to deprive the members of a right which they conceived they possessed from the beginning, and without even a hint of the design at the period of their first offer of service, there could be no principle or policy to excuse such conduct, and he trusted, that under circumstances such as those he had described, ministers would not press the plan alluded to by the right hon. gentleman; but if they really meant to take away altogether the right of recommendation from the volunteers themselves, he hoped that it would not be assigned to the colonel commandants of corps, with whom, for many reasons, he would, least of all others, wish it to rest, although upon them, as much as upon others, ministers would have the check described by the right hon. gent. There were some instances, he understood, where the agreement entered into with volunteer corps were of a particular nature, where the tender of service was upon certain conditions. In such cases the ministers ought, of course, to be tenderly cautious that the faith of government should not be violated. An hon. friend of his (Mr. Whitbread) had the honour to command a corps at Bedford, which, in its original offer of service, stated its conditions, namely—that two gentlemen, whose names were mentioned, and of whom his hon. friend was one, should have the command, and that all the other officers should be elected by the corps, which right of election to fill up any vacancies that might afterwards occur, was to rest with the members of the corps. This offer of service was accepted without any objection, either expressed or implied, to the conditions upon which the offer was made. A case of this kind, therefore, and perhaps there were many quite similar, he would submit it to the candour of ministers, and the justice of the House, was entitled to exception from any rule that it was intended to make general. After a few more remarks upon the propriety of strictly keeping faith with the volunteers, he concluded with expressing his confidence, that ministers possessed a sincere disposition to do justice to the pretensions and to gratify the feelings of that gallant body.

Lord Castlereagh observed, that the hon. gent. who had just spoken, had not followed his right hon. friend very closely in his ob-

servations upon his speech, by which this subject was brought before the house. His right hon. friend had stated what was the principle on which the volunteers proceeded previous to their existence as a regular body, and what was to be understood of their power after they were erected into, and constituted a body. The sentiment of his right hon. friend upon that subject was this, that a popular election was, generally speaking, contrary in principle to that discipline which is absolutely essential to every large military force; and entertaining that idea, his right hon. friend conceived there was a distinction between that which a corps might do previous to its becoming a military body, and that which it might do after it had been formed into a military body. It was generally through the medium of the recommendation of the different corps that their officers were submitted for the approbation of his Majesty through the medium of the secretary of state; but none of them should have apprehended, that they should have continued to have these recommendations after they had formed into a military body, because it was a principle which was in itself objectionable on the ground he had stated, that of a popular election, which was unfavourable to military discipline. In the first instance, that was, before they were formed into military bodies, there was no evil to be apprehended with respect to discipline, but the case was quite otherwise after they were formed into military bodies. Having once been formed into military corps, it was a delicate thing to expose such a corps to the inconveniences of a popular election. But his right hon. friend had made this distinction, and he had also stated, that although this general military principle operated upon the minds of his Majesty's ministers, yet there were exceptions to this, where his Majesty had been pleased to recognize a custom of choosing the officers by the men, and where that was the case that custom should remain undisturbed, for that was what good faith required. This was the case with some military forces in the city of London; this was the constitution of the military force raised in that city, and therefore although the principle of preventing military corps being exposed to the inconvenience of a popular election of officers was extremely important to be preserved, yet in these excepted cases they were to be endured, and in such cases the principle had been relaxed, and in this instance experience had shewn that it might be relaxed without prejudice to the public safety. The principle itself was important, but it might be relaxed, and the discretion

which governed this principle could not be left in better hands than those it was in at present namely, in the hands of his Majesty, advised as he was by his ministers, who were responsible for the advice they gave.—But whatever might be brought forward by his right hon. friend, the House might be assured that the principle of good faith would be kept entire, and adhered to without the slightest deviation; but, having said this, he must be allowed to say, that he deprecated the principle, as a general one, that large bodies of military, should be exposed to the inconveniences of popular election. That practice, therefore, of continuing to elect officers in all cases by the corps, would not do as a general rule. He would not, therefore, support the general right of a corps to chuse their own officers, unless upon terms in which they might be allowed to do so, where their services had been accepted by his Majesty, or in cases in which his Majesty should be pleased to relax the principle which prevented them from chusing their officers; yet this was not all; for while he deprecated the practice of military corps being subject to the evils of a popular election, on account of the effect it might produce upon discipline, there were other evils besides those he had hinted at, and such as the corps might feel among themselves; they would in many cases be put to difficulties which they were not perhaps altogether aware of. But having said this, he should add, that it was in his opinion material in the highest degree, that let the recommendation of officers come from whatsoever quarter it may, the feelings of the men who were to be commanded should be consulted, and regarded with great delicacy; for, after all, a volunteer corps could never be made to resemble any other military body, although it was clear, that they could never be well provided unless his Majesty had the general choice of those who were to command these corps, for his Majesty alone ought, generally speaking, to have the power of saying who was fit for the command of a military force within his dominions; this however, he said, without any idea of government having any breach of good faith with any body of men whomsoever; but he must again revert to the distinction which was obvious between a body of men before they are formed into a military force, and that what they might be permitted to do in one case had no analogy to what they ought to be permitted to do in the other; in the one case they might have a popular election without any danger, because in the one case they did not require discipline; in the other,

they could not have a popular election without danger to discipline, or in other words, in the one case, they were a civil body, in the other, they were a military body.

Mr. *Whitbread*.—Sir, if it had not been for the allusion made by my hon. friend (Mr. Sheridan) I should not perhaps have said any thing at present upon the subject now before the House, but I think it necessary to say a few words on the subject of the different corps chusing their own officers, as stated by the noble lord and the right hon. gent., particularly on that which has been stated by the right hon. gent., who has informed the House of the advice he should give to his Majesty in the event of any military corps persisting in the choice of its own officers. And, Sir, I am the more desirous of advertizing to the sentiments of the right hon. gent. as they came from himself, than to the explanation of the noble lord. The right hon. gent. has said, that if any corps should persist in the right of recommending to his Majesty its officers to command them, that he should advise his Majesty to dismiss that corps; that he should advise his Majesty in the first instance, not to listen to such recommendation; and in the second to dismiss such corps if they should persist in such recommendation. This, Sir, I apprehend, is much too general. The terms of the corps which I have the honour to command were that they should serve under officers specifically named by themselves; not only so, but also such as they may recommend hereafter to his Majesty, through the medium of the lord lieutenant of the county. Their services were accepted after they sent in these terms, nor were the terms in the least degree qualified when the service of this corps was accepted. If they had been told, that they should not have this choice or recommendation, not only of their present commander but also of their other officers, or that they should not be allowed to continue to have that recommendation, I really apprehend, Sir, that no such corps would have been formed at all. Now I should like to ask the right hon. gent., whether he would think himself consistent if he attempted to take away from that corps, the right of recommendation at all? As to the distinction between election and recommendation, I can hardly perceive it; they are in substance the same; for neither means any more, than to submit to the lord lieutenant the propriety of his transmitting to the Secretary of State the names of the persons whom they wished to be commanded by; but, of course, the crown, acting on the advice of its ministers would have the right of judging whether

such persons were fit to be commanders or not. Upon this subject there can be no doubt. Now, in the corps to which I have the honour to belong, the terms of their services are such, that if any vacancy were to happen for an officer, I should apply to the corps to say who they would wish to fill it; undoubtedly, I should feel myself bound to do so. Why, then, what is this but an election? And where is the evil of all this? The lord lieutenant has a right to say, I will not forward this recommendation to the Secretary of State, for I do not think the person recommended is fit for the office, or if the lord lieutenant should forward it, the Secretary of State may say, that it shall not take place, and advise his Majesty to that effect; then it will come back again to chuse another, and they must go on with their recommendations, until they have hit upon somebody to whom neither the lord lieutenant nor the Secretary of State has any objection; so that no one can ever have a commission in any volunteer corps, without the approbation of the crown; and this is in itself, as it appears to me, desirable, for the men ought to know the character of the person under whom they are to serve. But the right hon. gent. adverted to volunteer corps under establishments, like those of the last war, or if not those of the last war, of establishments different from those under which the present volunteer corps were formed. They have hitherto all enjoyed the power if not of electing, of recommending their officers; now I wish to know, whether this power was given to the volunteer corps by law or by connivance of the crown? If by law, it must belong to them generally; if by connivance, I should like to ask the right hon. gent. whether he has found any mischief in the practice? If he has not, why should he now attempt to exclude the volunteers from that which they had hitherto enjoyed without any inconvenience to the public, and take from them that for which they have much value, and without which, as I apprehend, not only would the volunteers become less numerous but also less efficient, according to their number, than they now are. Where I should like to ask, is the difference between the first choice and the second? In the first instance, the lot falls upon those generally who are the most known, who are the most remarkable for talents or for some qualities or other that distinguish them, either for high station, or something that gives them a preference to others, and for which there are, generally, very good reasons for recommending them to his Majesty; and, is it reasonable to suppose, that

the same motives which actuate the corps in the first instance, will not also influence them in the second, and that they will not continue to fill up vacancies, as they may happen in their corps, with the same propriety as they made the first choice? I do contend, that if the right hon. gent. acts up to the spirit of what he has said to-night, he will find himself in an error, which will be fatal to the whole volunteering system of this country. This, Sir, is my firm opinion, and I think it my duty to say so at once, and to entreat ministers to be cautious in what they do upon this occasion. For my own part had I offered my services as a private in any volunteer corps, I own I should be very unwilling to serve under any officer appointed by the Crown to command me without my own consent.—The right hon. gent. has gone through the whole history of the volunteer service, in which I shall not follow the right hon. gent., but merely make a few observations on some points in the speech of the right hon. gent. to the House previous to his motion.—He says, that ministers, finding they had no friends on the continent, it became us to look at home, and make the most of our internal strength, since we were at war. This system of volunteer service was resorted to, because we found ourselves at war without a friend on the continent to assist us.—I should have thought it would have become ministers to look about them and to see, whether we should have any friend on the continent to assist us, before we entered into war; this would have been the course pursued by a wise politician; but our sagacious ministers thought proper to adopt a contrary system, they got first into the war, and afterwards inquired how it could be supported: they then adopted the system of a volunteer service. Now, I am ready to confess, that the system of volunteer service is not the best, either for economy, or for the purpose of making military efforts, such as might have been made under a different system of policy and at the same time bringing forth all the energy of the people of England. But while I say this, I trust that neither the right hon. gent., or any other, will endeavour to bring upon me the odium of a desire “to raise a clamour” against the volunteer system. Nothing would be more unjust than such an imputation; for there is not, I believe, a man in the country, who has exerted himself more than I have done, in support of the volunteer system, when I found it was to be resorted to, as the only means of our general defence; but I am still of opinion, that it is not the best system that could have been resorted

to, for the general defence of the country in time of need. And here, Sir, I cannot help accusing ministers of wavering from day to day, in their system? proving thereby, that they had got into a path in which they had met with great difficulties and perplexities, and out of which, I am afraid they are not yet extricated. They first attempted to produce a General Defence Act, out of which arose the volunteer system all over the country. At that time they found, that 450,000 men had inrolled their names for the service of their country. Here I must beg to be understood as not, in the slightest degree, wishing to depreciate those men, on the contrary, no one has a higher opinion of the goodness of their motives and principles, in thus rushing forward in defence of their country, but yet I cannot help thinking, that it is of essential importance to look back upon this matter, to examine into the question of what we had really to trust to, in this mass of 450,000 men; to see what was this great body, who are now the grand mass of the army of England. I am persuaded, that a great portion of the mass is such as could not be depended upon for effective strength. They were too indiscriminately accepted by government; persons of all ages, and of all descriptions, without regard to infirmity or any unfitness, among whom were many who were not able to march, were received as volunteers. There certainly was a great enthusiasm, and all descriptions rushed forward as volunteers; this, undoubtedly, did honour to the zeal of the country, but it must not be disguised at the same time, that, among those who came forward, there were many who were quite incompetent to the carrying of arms; in some instances not above one-half of a whole district were actually fit for effective service. Then came the order of government to reduce their number to that of six times the amount of the militia. This sudden measure had a serious and alarming effect; it damped the ardour of the country so much, that it became a matter of considerable difficulty to bring men back again, and to persuade them to inrol their names when they found that their friends, with whom they had associated, were not to be allowed to go with them into the field. Now, after all this, and time being given us by the enemy, for he did not appear on our coast, although we all expected him, an explanation came forth from the ministers, the spirit of the people revived, and appeared again in its wonted lustre. Now, what was the intention of ministers at that time? Did they or did they not then intend to exempt the volunteers from the

army of reserve? No, they did not; and so I informed the volunteers then raising, and which I have now the honour to command; and, to their immortal honour, every man entered as a volunteer, although he thought he would have been liable to the service of the army of reserve. I told them all, that there was not one of them who would have any exemptions by entering as a volunteer, yet every one of them entered, notwithstanding that apprehension. But what was the effect of this? they were afterwards exempted both from the militia and the army of reserve. And what was the further effect? Why, that neither the militia nor army of reserve could ever be properly filled up; it was utterly impossible that they should, for all the best men are serving already in the volunteers, as well as some of the most unfit; and I know it to be a fact, that there are not men who could be drawn to serve in the militia to the number intended to be raised of that body; the same may also be said with regard to the army of reserve. How then is the recruiting of the army to go on? I have no difficulty in saying, that, in the present state of things, it is impossible. Those who would have constituted the army of reserve and militia, are now filling up the ranks of the volunteers. Such being the effect of the volunteer system; and so, the best course now to be taken is, that to make the volunteer system as beneficial, and at the same time as palatable to the public as possible, and to bring them to as good a state of discipline as is applicable to a force of that nature. Ministers then had recourse to the opinion of the Attorney and Solicitor General, in order to get over another difficulty which they felt themselves under, and these learned gentlemen gave it as their opinion, that the volunteers were exempted from the army of reserve; after which came the question whether a volunteer could resign or not? Sir, it always was my opinion, that a volunteer could resign whenever he pleased, and return his arms, if he had any (it was a long time before they could get any) but while a man remained in the corps there were means of rendering him liable to pay fines for his non-attendance, and which fines were levied upon his goods if he had any. But here again the law stopt short, for if he had no goods, there was no way of imposing any other penalty on the volunteer, so that a man might walk out of the service when he pleased. But the right hon. gent. has, to my great surprise and joy declared, that if the Court of King's Bench had not decided the law to be that a volunteer could resign as it has done, he should have proposed to make the law so;

now, I must confess that this struck me extremely, for it is to be remembered, that the right hon. gent. sent to all the lieutenants of the counties, who, in their turn again sent to all the magistrates, as the exposition of the law, the opinion of the two law officers of the crown, the Attorney and Solicitor General, and upon the strength of this, magistrates had acted all over the country, which opinion was, that a volunteer could not resign, and which opinion turned out not to be law. Without intending the least disrespect for the two learned gentlemen who gave their opinion, this erroneous opinion, for so I am now bound to call it, since a court of law has pronounced it to be so, and without intending any thing disrespectful of that opinion, I must be allowed to say, that it was an opinion which led the magistrates into error, for they acted upon that opinion as if it was a sound exposition of the law of the land. Sorry should I have been, to have found that this opinion was consonant to the law of the land; but I was very much surprised, though greatly rejoiced, at what I heard from the right hon. gent. to night upon that subject, and I think that the public at large have a right to complain of the right hon. gent. for finding this opinion given by these learned gentlemen, which now appears not to be law to be, namely, that a volunteer could not resign. The right hon. gent. caused it to be most industriously circulated and published all over the country, by which the public have for a while been misled, and this step was the more remarkable, since it was an opinion promulgating that as law which the right hon. gent. has this night told us, he did not wish to continue to be the law, for he has expressly declared, that if the law had been found to be so, he should have proposed to alter it, and to make it what it now is. Having said thus much, I must add, that I feel extremely anxious that justice should be done to the volunteers in every particular. With regard to that part of the volunteer system which is called the 'economical part of it, they are greatly mistaken who conceive it to be so to the public. Who are the public? The individuals of whom it is composed. Now it is a gross mistake to suppose, that a system by which no money is taken out of the public purse in form, does not really cause a great expense to the public. The expense to the public is the same in whatever way it is defrayed, if it comes out of the pockets of the individuals, of whom the public is composed; for what difference can there be between paying 50l. into a subscription chest to support a volunteer

corps, (which subscription, by the way, may ere long become compulsory), and paying a tax to that amount into 'the exchequer? And, in this respect, I assert that this system is extremely expensive to the public, for, at a very moderate computation, it is upwards of 4l. per man.—Another objection to the system is, that from their form and condition, the volunteer corps are continually subject to, and in daily danger of, being dissolved; not that the individuals of whom the volunteer corps are composed want spirit, for if dissolved in one street, I am confident they would enter again in the next; but they are subject every hour to the danger of dissolution. Suppose they were to say, that they did not like their commander, and that they wanted to chuse another, and they were not to be allowed that privilege, and that they should not have the satisfaction even of recommending another officer, as the right hon. gent. has told them they shall not, and they were to say they were no longer volunteers? What, Sir, is the remedy? A very short one, certainly; they must be dismissed. But, if they amounted to 1,000 men—this would be a prodigious loss, at least for a while, and this is a matter which I wish to be attended to by his Majesty's ministers.—There is another evil connected with volunteer corps, from whence I am apprehensive they may be dissolved, and that is a want of funds to carry on the system. This is a point which government must look into with great attention, and if they neglect it, I venture to predict, that it will be impossible to carry on this system long. There is no corps of which I have any knowledge, that is not in some degree or other in debt. Many corps have endeavoured to excel others in their dress and ornaments, which I certainly do not blame. It is natural enough when men feel the ardour of a military spirit, but it is attended with an expense that cannot be supported unless the funds of almost every corps in the kingdom are increased—Men must be clothed from head to foot, and after a great coat and the other articles of dress are provided, it will not, on the most moderate computation, as I have said already, amount to less than 4l. per man, which will be a tremendous sum of money in the whole. Now, Sir, what is the remedy?—A second subscription; but that is a plan which I should strongly deprecate, for the mischief of it would be to collect from the liberal, and perhaps the poor, that to which the illiberal and rich ought also to contribute in a fair proportion. No such thing could take place if the wants of the volunteers were to be supplied from the na-

tional treasury. For these reasons, I consider the plan now acted upon for providing the volunteers with necessaries, a very mistaken plan of economy.—There is another point to be attended to: at present, it is the rule to allow no pay to any officer who instructs the men, however well he may do it, or may have had the unqualified praise of the inspecting officer, unless such person shall have been in the army; this is a defect which ought to be remedied, for men cannot be expected to give their time and labour for nothing but mere praise; men in middling circumstances cannot afford it. It is also worth while for ministers to remember, that the pay of these officers is only for 20 days, and now they are to be out 24 days; the additional 4 days ought to be paid for, or we shall find many persons remiss in their duty. I have taken the liberty of pointing out these things. I fear it will be found, that ministers have been getting from one error to another, and that they have now placed the country in a situation in which it has no choice, but must trust its main defence to the volunteer force; it, therefore, behoves them to render that system as little objectionable as possible. In my judgment, the augmentation of the militia has been carried on a little too much; and I am confirmed in this opinion by the conduct of ministers, by the enormous expense which has been occasioned in drawing men from the militia afterwards by bounty into the regular service, and also by the expense of raising the Army of Reserve, and at last being obliged to have recourse to the volunteer system, which is much more expensive than either. It is for the right hon. gentlemen, into whose hands his Majesty has thought proper to entrust the government of this nation at the present important moment, to consider the best means for providing for its general defence and safety; it is for members of Parliament to speak their sentiments upon such means, and to shew the House the imperfection of such means, in order to bring them to the best state they are capable of. This is a liberty which I have taken to myself: it is not for me to point out what is better, it is my duty, as a member of Parliament, to shew to the House, what appears to me to be erroneous in the conduct of ministers and which they ought now to rectify. I shall only add, that I trust the right hon. gent. will consider of allowing volunteers the practice of recommending their officers to the crown; will consider also of the expense of providing clothing for the volunteers, and the pay to which I have alluded, and of the difficulty of procuring the at-

tendance of officers who do not receive pay for the additional four days, now about to be proposed, without some allowance. Here, Sir, for the present, I shall leave the subject, recommending the whole of it to the most serious consideration of his Majesty's government.

Mr. *Windham* remarked on the conduct of an hon. gent. (Mr. *Sheridan*) who had gone before him, who, having begun by professing his agreement with the proposal made by the right hon. secretary, that there should be no discussion that night, had immediately proceeded to take a part in direct opposition to the agreement thus professed.—This, as usual, had led to further deviations, till, step by step, the debate had proceeded, not only into the details of the measure, but into questions of the constitution of particular corps.—His purpose in rising, was to call to the recollection of the House, the proposal which he had just alluded to, to which he meant to adhere himself, and which he conceived the House would think it, upon the whole, most advisable to adopt.—It was not that in opening the present business, the right hon. secretary had not gone into a variety of topics, which he should be very glad to remark upon, and which he could not possibly pass over in silence, were silence to be construed as acquiescence. He begged to have it distinctly understood, that he was silent for the reasons only that he had given; namely, that he concurred in the recommendation of the hon. mover, and would reserve what he had to say to subsequent stages of the proceeding. Some of the topics of the right hon. gentleman were, to be sure, of a sort on which it did not seem that there was much to be said. When the right hon. gentleman laid down his laws of debating, having in view, he supposed, the well-known laws of philosophising, and declared that they were to proceed without heat, to abstain from every thing violent, to consider every thing with coolness and impartiality, &c. &c.; and when, in like manner, he talked of those, who were enemies to the volunteers only because they were at the same time enemies to the constitution in church and state, he was at a loss to know what to say, because he did not very well know what the observations meant, nor against whom they were intended to point. His history of the volunteer system, with its descent and progress from the time of the last administration to the present day, inasmuch, as it *was* a mere history, and, he supposed, a correct one, was as little a subject on which he had anything to remark. As to the legal discussions, he should cer-

tainly abstain from them, not only for the general reason already given, but because it would be ungenerous to attack the right hon. gent., where he seemed already to have so many enemies upon his hands; the whole of his speech in that part being a sort of conflict with three powerful antagonists, viz. the Law Officers of the Crown, the Court of King's Bench, and his own bill: with all of whom he was keeping up a kind of running fight, much like that which gentlemen might have read in the last gazette, though not so glorious he feared, nor likely to terminate quite so successfully.—The defects which the right hon. gent. dwelt upon, and which he described as inherent in the system, and incapable of being cured, were urged, he presumed, for the purpose of reconciling those by whom the system had been originally opposed.—These topics, he should content himself with having adverted to, without at present making them the subject of any discussion. As little would he introduce discussion in what further he had to say. But he must trouble the House for a few moments longer, partly to give vent to his surprise,—a surprise not excited by what the bill contained; but by what it did not contain,—and for the further and more important purpose of putting it seriously to the right hon. gent. whether he conceived, that by a bill such as the present, by such a scrap and remnant of a measure (for so he *must* call it), he could hope to meet the public exigency, or appease that sort of craving expectation which the nation felt, of something really substantial and solid, to relieve it in its present difficulties? He earnestly hoped that before the measure should be finally settled, the right hon. gent. would impress upon his mind a more just idea of the situation of the country, and of the magnitude of the object requiring to be provided for: that he would convince himself, that it was not the mere inconvenience arising from mistakes and ambiguities in the volunteer bills, (plentiful as they might be) and which an emendatory or explanatory act might set right, but a fundamental failure in an important part of the system; that one of the main pillars of our security was in danger of giving way; that a part of the building seemed to be actually falling in: that four-fifths of the national defence—four-fifths in extent at least, if not in substance—was found to have been raised on so loose a foundation, to be composed of such improper materials, and to be so unskilfully put together, that at least a very dangerous settlement had taken place, and that no one could say, whether in a few

months, or even a few weeks, the whole might not become a heap of ruins. Did the right hon. gent. really suppose, that in such a state of things, the expectation of the country could be satisfied, or its safety provided for, by a measure such as the present; and that by sticking in a few bricks here and there, by propping the building in one part and cramping it in another, he could put this mansion into tenantable repair, so as either to induce the inhabitants to stay in it, or to make it safe for those who lived in the neighbourhood?—He would not dwell even upon this topic at the present moment, but, leaving to the right hon. gent. to judge of the value of the suggestion which he could not forbear to offer, though with no great hopes of its producing any effect, he would take the liberty of urging to the House, what he was sure *would* be urged with effect, namely, that they should avail themselves of all that inquiry and consideration could do in the intermediate time, in order to come to the discussion of this question, prepared at once with just views of its magnitude, as well as of its importance.

Colonel Eyre.—Sir; whatever inclination I may have to express myself at length on this subject, I shall, on the present occasion, adhere to the recommendation given in the outset to abstain from discussion; I have listened with the most sincere satisfaction to the speech of the right hon. Secretary. I highly approve the plan he has brought forward, which I hope will be the means of bringing to perfection the volunteer system, and of correcting those imperfections which are necessarily incident to a measure so vast, new, and unusual, and that overstrained discipline to which, from the urgency of the times, the volunteers were expected to conform. I am, Sir, a warm friend to the volunteer system, which I think better calculated than any other to effect the security of the country, at the least possible expense; and instead of exhibiting that shattered mansion of which we have just heard, I am confident, that, with proper support, it will form such a bulwark, as to render the country capable of setting every attack at defiance.

Sir John Wrottesley rose to advert to one particular point in the speech of the right hon. Secretary, that for authorising the deputy lieutenants of counties, to make the quarters for the militia and army of reserve, heavier in the districts which had not raised a certain proportion of volunteers. This was a point not to be considered lightly, and Parliament should pause before it came to any general resolution upon it; so should the

right hon. gent. before he proposed any general measure. In the county to which he belonged (Stafford), the volunteer service was at present nearly confined to the northern and north-western districts. The inhabitants of the southern and south-western districts, were not deficient in zeal or unanimity; he did not know a man among them, who was not ready to come forward without requiring any exemption. They had made their offers in due time, and if those offers were not attended to, he thought those who made them were not to be considered as having been deficient; and therefore, the House should be cautious of coming to any resolution, which would involve them, or persons in similar circumstances.

Mr. *Secretary Yorke* rose to reply to some observations which had been offered in disapprobation of the principle proposed by his bill. But first in answer to what had fallen from the hon. Baronet, he said, government in the distribution of the volunteer armed force, had acted as the exigencies of the public service seemed to require, or as local circumstances rendered necessary. With respect to the condition upon which an hon. gent. opposite to him (Mr. Whitbread) had stated the volunteers generally, to have offered their services, namely, that of having the privilege continually of electing their own officers, he denied that such a principle ever was recognized by government. It was possible that the lord lieutenants of counties to whom such offers of service were first tendered, might not always transmit the tenders to his Majesty's Secretary of State in the precise words in which such tenders were originally made: but, certainly, since he had the honour of coming into an official department of his Majesty's government, he had no recollection of any offer made or accepted upon any such principle. There had come, from many populous towns and districts, tenders of service upon the principle of choosing and recommending their own officers; but government, without a breach of the military principle, could do no more than connive at the custom, which though they might have done it, was never meant as an acknowledgment of that as a general principle which was contrary to the spirit of military law; and, certainly, since he had the honour of filling a situation in the military department of administration, he knew of no offers of service accepted upon such conditions as those of continuing to elect their officers, after the formation of the corps was first completed. The distinction to be taken between the first agreement amongst the mem-

bers of a corps to associate for the purpose of offering their service in the public defence, and recommending, from amongst their number, the persons whom they wished to be officers, to be approved by his Majesty, and the situation of that corps after it was completed and acknowledged as a military corps, was pretty obvious; and indeed from the very nature of military service, it was impossible that government could accede to such a principle with any corps as the permanent right of electing their officers.—Suppose, for instance, in case of actual service in the field, a body of volunteers going into action beside any other troops of the line, or militia, and that any of their officers should be killed in action; was that corps, the moment the action was over, to proceed to the election of officers from amongst themselves to fill up the vacancy, without appealing to the judgment of a commander in chief? He by no means meant to deny their right of recommending persons whom they conceived eligible for officers; but there was a material difference between the right of recommending, and that of electing. By denying the latter, it was by no means to be implied, that officers were to be forced upon those corps without in any degree consulting their wishes and attachments. It was not to be presumed, that in recommending persons as eligible for officers in such corps, the lord-lieutenant of a county would give such recommendation without consulting the commanding officer of such corps, and exercising his own judgment, in choosing such a person as was most likely to bear their confidence and attachment. The hon. member had argued as if the right of permanently electing their officers was the general idea of all the volunteer corps; whereas, from the best information he could collect on the subject, no such idea was generally entertained. But if it was possible, that any such notion had generally gone forth, or even that such a principle did really exist, was it to be argued, that if such a principle was found to be inexpedient and injurious to the objects of public service, that Parliament was to have no privilege of revising the volunteer system, and making such amendments as obvious necessity should point out, without incurring the charge of breaking faith with the volunteers! He trusted that nothing which he had urged in support of the necessity of such amendments, could be construed to convey the slightest imputation upon that gallant and patriotic body of men;—but surely, that could not be called a breach of faith which recognized the right

of every volunteer, who disliked the continuance of his services under the new regulation, to withdraw himself from his corps; recollecting, however, at the same time, that by such resignation, he surrendered all claims of exemption from the ballot for other branches of the public force to which he became entitled under this first regulation. Another point adverted to in the bill, was the increase proposed in the number of days' service, from 20 days to 24 days; but this he thought could make no very material difference to individuals.

Mr. *Whitbread* rose to explain. He said, that what he called a breach of faith, was, that after putting men to considerable expense and trouble in acquiring discipline, under certain acknowledged principles, by which they were taught to consider themselves exempt from the militia and army of reserve, a new principle is brought forward, to which, unless they think fit to accede, their former exertions go for nothing, and their exemptions are forfeited. If the right hon. gent. denied the right of volunteer corps to elect from amongst themselves the persons whom they should approve for their officers, he begged to know, how it was that the London and Westminster Light Horse continued to this day to exercise that privilege; for surely if it was the right of one volunteer corps, it was equally that of another.

Mr. *Secretary Yorke* answered, that the principle upon which that corps was constituted, differed most materially from every other in the service. They were a much older corps than any other, and the principle of electing and recommending their own officers, was a compact agreed to by his Majesty, upon their formation. They had beside another privilege peculiar to them, that their appointments came, not through the lord lieutenant of the county, but direct from the Secretary of State. So long as his Majesty should think it expedient to continue the services of this corps, his Majesty would no doubt, maintain towards them the terms of their original constitution; but certainly no such principle was implied or understood by government in respect to the volunteer corps in general as now formed.

Mr. *Whitbread* replied, that though, according to the argument of the right hon. gent., the Crown had the privilege of rejecting the claims of the volunteers to chuse their own officers, he hoped its ministers would have the wisdom to advise the crown not to exert it. He was sorry to see the right hon. secretary treat the matter so lightly. He conjured ministers seriously and cautiously to pause, before they ventured to

precipitate a measure which, at such a crisis as the present might be productive of the most mischievous consequences.

Mr. *Sturges* rose, and expressed some surprise, that the Right Hon. Secretary of State, in speaking of the constitution and privilege of the London and Westminster Light Horse on account of their long services, had made no mention of another respectable corps, which he conceived no less entitled to consideration for its early, long and active services, alluding, we presume, to the Bloomsbury and Inns of Court corps, of which the hon. and learned gent. is a member. He could not avoid expressing, in coincidence with a right hon. gent. on the other side of the House (Mr. *Windham*), his surprise and astonishment, not at what the right hon. secretary had this night expressed, but at his omission to have expressed much more upon a topic of such vital importance to the country. Upon a subject in which the whole nation was so deeply interested, the mind of the metropolis, and of the country at large, had been bent with anxious expectation to the measure proposed to have been this night explained by the right hon. gent.; a measure which was expected, as it was proposed, to remedy all the defects, and amend all the errors, which had crept into the volunteer system and excited so much disputation and animosity throughout the country. But what did this great measure amount to, now that it was explained? Merely to a change in the number of days of public exercise necessary to exemption, to a declaration that the corps have no longer a right to elect their own officers, and to a recognition of the right of resignation. He could not but agree with the hon. Member opposite to him (Mr. *Whitbread*), that such an alteration in the volunteer system certainly amounted to a breach of faith, and that such a change in the number of days necessary to the volunteer's exemption was a most material departure from the original condition of service: nevertheless, he was ready to acknowledge it was an alteration necessary to the exigencies of our situation. He did hope, that his Majesty's ministers would have taken a lesson from the deprecable consequences which had already flowed from the errors and imperfections of the volunteer system as formed by them, and would have resorted to the wisdom of that House for a complete revision of the system, in order to a complete and effectual amendment of all its defects and errors, instead of tampering with temporary experiments, which would only expose the system to new difficulties

and to the necessity of resorting, again and again, to the legislature, for new alterations and amendments; to the production of new disputes and discontents. He did hope, that in proposing an effectual amendment to the errors of a system upon which the security and existence of the country so principally depended, the proposition would have been submitted originally to a Committee of the whole House, in order that it might have the advantage of suggestions from gentlemen of great talents on both sides of the House, many of whom had much experience in the volunteer service, and had spent the greater part of their lives in the army. A measure thus originated would come forward in a form much more perfect and satisfactory than that which this night was proposed by the minister; and would have been much more likely to remedy all errors and defects, and prevent all future cavillings, than one brought forward in so crude a form, without the advantages of such a consultation. He concluded by pressing on the wisdom and prudence of the House, the necessity of a full deliberation upon a measure of so much importance, and of rendering it, once for all, so complete, as to obviate, as far as possible, all probable necessity for further alteration or amendment.

The *Attorney-General*, in answer to the observations of his learned friend behind him (Mr. Sturges), observed, that it was the duty of government to bring forward such plans and projects of measures, as they deemed advisable for the public service. There was every opportunity for discussion, amendment, and improvement, in the subsequent stages. He had also to advert to another point laid down by his learned friend, who carried the idea of breach of faith to far greater length than it had been carried before. In his opinion, the power of resigning put a bar to all possibility of breach of faith. It never could have been meant, or understood, that government should be bound up by the original terms of the first volunteer acts; and when the right of resignation was recognized and established, Parliament had a right to make every alteration that was deemed just and proper.—With respect to the opinion which he had given, and which had been determined, on the highest authority, to be erroneous, he did not wish to say any thing. That opinion was now nothing, any farther than it regarded him; and he was far from thinking, that the attention of the House would be well taken up by any thing that concerned so humble an individual. But to those who expressed surprize that such an opinion

could have been entertained, he could not help observing, that they should consider what the nature of the volunteer contract was. He wished to ask them the question, whether a volunteer entered into any engagement or not? He would ask, whether there was not an engagement to come forward, and to be ready in case of invasion; and was every man who entered into this engagement to be free from it till invasion came? It was very strange that an obligation which became so absolute and peremptory as that was, should make no provision for the person being forth coming on whom the obligation was to fall. But it was idle to engage the House in defending an opinion which was nothing more than a mere conjecture, more or less founded on rational grounds, of what the decision of the judges would be. The decision of the judges in this instance had declared his opinion wrong, and he should not now have adverted to it but for the notice that some gentlemen had taken of it, and lest he should be deemed shy, because he had been wrong. He again noticed the mischievous tendency of the idea that every alteration in the volunteer duties was a breach of faith.

Mr. *Sturges*, in explanation, said, he never meant to assert that government should canvass the opinion of the House before they brought forward any plan. What he meant was, that the House should do in this case as it had in most others of like importance, resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, where the subject might be more fully discussed, and government bring forward their present plans in the shape of resolutions.

Mr. *T. Grenville* rose, not to debate at large the whole of the proposed bill in detail, as there would be many opportunities for doing that in the course of its subsequent stages, but to abide by the injunction of the right hon. Secretary on the opening of his proposition, by receiving from him calmly the explanation he had to give, and deferring debate upon the subject to a future opportunity; he could not, however, leave that House without expressing his surprize and astonishment, in common with his right hon. friend (Mr. Windham), at the explanation he had given. He coincided in the judicious suggestion of the learned gent. under the gallery (Mr. Sturges), notwithstanding the manner in which his opinion had been attacked by the Attorney-general, and from which it would seem almost criminal to call in question the consummate wisdom of his Majesty's ministers, upon a subject on which they had already displayed so much

versatility of opinions and conduct. He could not, however, see the criminality of suggesting to his Majesty's ministers, the propriety of an appeal to the united wisdom of that House, upon bringing forward a question of such vital importance, instead of coming forward with one so utterly and totally inadequate to the object proposed. It was not his intention to have said so much in the present stage of the business; but his object in rising was to defend the right and necessity of appeal to a committee of the whole House, upon a measure of so much importance; and for the suggestion of which so much censure had been thrown upon the hon. and learned gent. He should not now argue, whether or not the dismissal of a corps for asserting the right of electing their officers, was or was not a breach of faith on the part of government; but he sincerely recommended to his Majesty's ministers, before they brought forward the question for ultimate discussion, to make up their minds, and learn to agree with each other upon the point, for this night they seemed at variance. The right hon. Secretary asserted, that the right of electing officers never was possessed by the volunteers, and that the denial of right was no breach of faith. The noble lord (Castlereagh) argued as if it was a breach of faith; for though he stated such a claim to be a violation of the military principle, and so far agreed with his right hon. colleague, yet much as he admired and loved that principle, he thought it good in some cases only to be departed from; for he insisted, that the Crown should most tenaciously keep faith with the volunteers upon this point. The right hon. Sec. of State asserted the right of the Crown to dismiss any corps asserting such a privilege; and the noble lord, while he admitted the right of the Crown, insisted upon the necessity of relaxing it in this case. Upon which of those was the House to rest their confidence? or how was the House to accept a proposition, as adequate to its purposes, upon which his Majesty's ministers, sitting in council by each other, could not agree?

Lord *Castlereagh*, in explanation, denied that he had offered the arguments imputed to him by the right hon. gent.; or that any thing he had said in the course of debate was at variance with the arguments of his right hon. friend the Secretary of State, or his learned friend the Attorney General. What he had said was, that if there was any particular corps constituted with the particular privilege of electing its own officers, by special compact with the Crown, so long as that corps was allowed to continue in ex-

istence, the Crown was bound to keep faith with it scrupulously, upon the terms and conditions of their original constitution; but he by no means denied the privilege of the Crown to dismiss that corps whenever it should be deemed expedient to discontinue its services.

Mr. *Hobhouse* declared he should not have been actuated by any particular motive to press himself upon the attention of the House, were it not for the observations of the hon. and learned gentleman under the gallery, who professed himself so very zealous an advocate for referring the bill proposed by his right hon. friend below him, to the consideration of a Committee of the whole House. He would ask that hon. and learned gentleman, what were the very strong and imperious reasons which rendered the measure he recommended so very necessary? Was it not in the recollection of every man who heard him, that when the bills passed the House, the consolidation and amendment of which was the object of the proposed act, no objection whatever had been started to them in their rise, progress, and conclusion, because they had not originated in a Committee of the whole House? The former bills respecting the formation and regulation of volunteer corps, were unquestionably of the highest importance, and yet in no single instance did it occur, that they had been opposed on the ground of their not having been previously submitted to and framed by a Committee of the whole House. He trusted, therefore, that the argument advanced by the hon. and learned gentleman would be found inapplicable to the question under discussion. Several gentlemen had with great earnestness expressed their astonishment and surprise, not at what had fallen from his right hon. friend who opened the business that evening, but at what had not fallen from him: not at what had been done, but at what had not been done in the arrangements which were submitted to the consideration of the House. Now he must, in his turn, express his surprise and astonishment that although these gentlemen were so very eager to discover and point out things which appeared to their minds deficiencies of considerable importance, they never urged improvements which might tend to the amelioration of the volunteer system. They were, indeed, extremely ready to detect errors and faults, but they suggested no alteration, and advised no plan of their own framing. The only fair conclusion that could be drawn from their speeches was, that they thought themselves the only fit persons to save the country in the present emergency. They asserted, in bold and confident lan-

guage, that the building of the state was tottering to its ruin, but they furnished no buttresses; nor assistance to keep it from falling. When he witnessed inconsistencies of that nature, he could not avoid making some remarks upon them; and he trusted that under every point of view, the bill which was the object of his right hon. friend's motion, would be found perfectly adapted to give strength and efficiency to the volunteer force of the country.

Mr. Grenville rose to explain. He observed, that it was unnecessary for him to make any answer to the charge of inconsistency, which had been preferred against him by the hon. gent. who spoke last; but he merely wished to set him right relative to the question of referring the consideration of the bill to a whole House. He had, he begged leave to state, never recommended that this business should be again commenced in the Committee; but he certainly had expressed his concern, that it had not originated in a Committee of the whole House, in which the right hon. gent. who brought it forward, and his colleagues in office, might have derived essential advantages from the talents, information, and experience, of all the members.

Dr. Laurence rose to vindicate his right hon. friends from the imputations which had been thrown on them. He observed, that when gentlemen had expressed their surprise, it was only what might very naturally be expected on a view of the various changes which had taken place in the minds of his Majesty's ministers. If however, the observation of an hon. gent. opposite (Mr. Hobhouse) was correct, as to the desire of getting the places of ministers being the principal stimulus to an opposition to their measures, it must be fairly inferred, that as that hon. gent. had for so many years regularly opposed the measures of his Majesty's ministers, that his only view was to get on that Bench on which he now sits. There was one point to which he wished to advert, and he considered it of no small importance—the present measure had been represented as calculated to remove all possible evils; yet the right hon. Sec. had described it as the least of two evils. The right hon. Secretary had allowed that it was impossible to augment the regular army or the militia; and, therefore, of the two evils, was inclined to choose the least. The system, he contended, had many radical defects, which it would be necessary to remove before it could be rendered efficient to its object. The bill proposed to be introduced was intended to consolidate three acts of last ses-

sion. It, however, appeared to him likely to produce no effect, but in the appointment of officers, the conduct of committees, and the recognition of that for law which the decision of the Court of King's Bench had already ascertained to be the law. The learned gent. here adverted with considerable delicacy to the opinion of the Attorney-general. He contended that his Majesty's ministers were bound to consult the wisdom of the House in the first instance. This was the stage in which every effort ought to be made to render the measure as complete as possible. They were particularly called on in the critical situation of the country to deliberate with wisdom and discretion, to square, shape, and model the measure in the outset, so as to render it adequate to the important national objects to which it was to be directed. He wished to press on the House the necessity of mature deliberation, and not to suffer a measure, of the last consequence to the security and defence of the country, to slide in, as a little bill, unheeded and undiscussed.

Mr. Secretary Yorke informed the learned member that he had never stated the impossibility of increasing the regular army. In the present situation of the country, and of the army, he was of opinion that it could not be carried to a greater extent than it had already reached, though, under certain regulations, he thought it might. The militia he had certainly considered as incapable of being further augmented; and, from the situation of France, and of the Continent, it appeared to him unavoidable to provide a considerably greater military force than either the regular army, or the militia, or both, constituted.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer.—Sir; I shall detain the House but a few moments, before it comes to a decision on the question under consideration. In a discussion of some hours length, I have heard no objection urged against the motion of my right hon. friend, but that it ought to have been submitted to a committee of the whole House, that the whole of the measure proposed to be brought forward was inefficient to its object, and that it would disappoint the expectations entertained by the public. With respect to the proposition for submitting the measure to the consideration of a committee of the whole House, I am at a loss to know where in the Journals the gentlemen have found the precedent for such a course of proceeding. During the last war many propositions were submitted to Parliament for the effectual security and defence of the realm; yet not one of them originated in a committee of the whole

House. A sufficient opportunity will be afforded to gentlemen, in the committee on the bill, to offer such observations as they may deem necessary, and to render the measure as perfect and effectual as mature deliberation and adequate discussion can make it. But the right hon. gent. has represented the measure, as opened by my right hon. friend, as miserably defective. My right hon. friend, however, did not state the system to be a system of perfection. He was fully aware of the utter impossibility of attaining perfection in any human institution, within the short period that has elapsed since the adoption of the measure. It is not at once that a measure of such magnitude and extent can be brought to full and final completion. What, Sir, is the object of my right hon. friend?—to obviate the inconveniences which have been found to arise from the effect of the system, as it at present exists, to remove the difficulties which have been experienced in its execution, and to apply an effectual remedy to the practical defects and inconveniences which have occurred. The practical inconveniences of the system may be ranged under three heads: first, the election of officers; second, the power of committees; and third, the right of resignation. My right hon. friend has stated, that the only instance in which his Majesty's ministers could countenance the existence of committees was, where their interference was limited to objects not military. They may be found necessary to adjust the accounts of the internal arrangement of a corps, but it is the determination of his Majesty's government to discountenance their interference in functions at all military.—As to the election of officers, much difference of opinion has prevailed on the subject; and as it is a subject upon which much discussion will probably take place, there is every probability that it will be placed on such a footing, as will give entire and eventual satisfaction. What my right hon. friend stated was, that in all cases where the election of officers formed a part of the original constitution of a corps, his Majesty's discretion would be extended, so long as it should be his pleasure to admit the continuance of the services of such corps. Good faith will in every instance concede what is due to principle. But, Sir, I do not consider the measure proposed as any violation of the public faith, as it has been represented by the hon. gent. (Mr. Sturges) under the gallery. I do, however, admit, that a violation of faith would in some degree attach to the system; and that his Majesty's ministers would be

justly liable to inculpation, if, in a service so extensive, so serious, and important, and on which the future salvation of the country depends, they were to attempt to fetter that free agency, which is the life and soul of the volunteer force.—With all the respect which I entertain for the opinion of my learned friend (the Attorney General), and with all the attention which I am disposed to pay to the opinion of an hon. gent. not now in his place, I am not influenced by either in my own. Independent of the opinion of these gentlemen, and independent of the decision of the Court of King's Bench, I am convinced, that Parliament is bound in good faith to construe the meaning of the acts, with a bona fide view to the precise terms of the law, as to the conceptions of the people; and if the individuals composing the volunteer corps of the kingdom, conceive themselves not to be deprived by the existing laws of their free agency, I consider that single consideration as binding on Parliament. If, therefore, the judgment of the King's Bench had coincided with the opinion of my learned friend (the Attorney General); if the expediency of that opinion were even admitted, yet as a contrary impression does prevail amongst the individuals composing the volunteer corps, I should have thought it my duty to have come forward to advise the House to give the volunteers a new option, by passing an act, declaring, in express terms, what is generally understood to be the tenor of their original contract; namely, that every man should be at liberty to resign at any time he should think proper, excepting only when an enemy should be in our country or upon our shores. It is the very essence of this constitution, that the parties should be at full and complete liberty to quit their corps whenever they shall think proper; and, I contend, that from the zeal and spirit which has been displayed by the whole country, there is no reason to apprehend that any individual would resign on slight grounds.—Sir, I ask pardon of the enthusiasm with which all classes of the community have come forward, if, for a moment, I have supposed it possible for any to resign except on grounds which left them no alternative; but if there should be individuals of that description, sure I am, that they ought to be consigned to infamy, that their names should be execrated, and themselves considered as traitors to the most sacred of causes, and guilty of offering themselves for the defence of every thing dear and valuable on earth, and of abandoning the glorious object in the moment of peril and uncertainty. This, Sir, should be his punish-

ment, but the hand of the law should not be extended to coerce them.—As to the committees of volunteer corps my right hon. friend only proposes to confine them solely to financial affairs, and to see that they have nothing military in their functions.—A right hon. gent. urged early in the discussion, that we were contemplating the probable dissolution of the principal part of the military defence of the country. Let me ask that right hon. gent. what was the state of the country in July last, whether at that period he could have contemplated such a force, and in such a state of discipline as the force now actually existing? If he could, then the confidence of that right hon. gent. in the real spirit and patriotism of the country far surpasses any which I entertain, though no hon. member can possibly estimate the spirit of the country more highly than myself.—The hon. gent. who has just sat down, stated, that my right hon. friend admitted that the regular army could not be augmented. My right hon. friend on the contrary, stated only, that the most effectual mode of providing for the security and defence of the country was by the system under which the great mass of the population of the country has been moulded to military objects. It was wisely observed by an hon. gent. during the last session, that the security of a country depends chiefly on the diversified nature of the force employed in its defence. As to the actual state of the military arrangements of the country, let me ask, whether there ever has been in the short space of eight months so large a force of regulars and militia, and in such a state of discipline, as at present? It has been urged, that the means of providing for the effectual security of the empire has been neglected; but the fact is, that a larger regular force is now in Great Britain and Ireland, than has ever been before provided in so short a period. With every deference to the merits of such a force, I think it unfair to make their superiority the cause of depreciating the services of another meritorious description of persons, whose exertions however have been deprecated in that House, but whose zeal and patriotism forms the proudest monument of virtuous public spirit, that ever distinguished any period of the history of this, or of any other country. If there exists defects in the system under which they are regulated; if inconveniences are experienced in its operation, let it be our business to remove the former, and obviate the latter. Let us see how the good sense of the people will work out its perfection. Do not let us stop the great instrument of our

security. Let us cherish it as a proof of the affection of the people for their King and their constitution. Let us watch its progress, and marking those instances of error or insufficiency which may occur, let us endeavour to apply the remedies as occasions may arise. All I ask of gentlemen is, that they will not endeavour to put the country out of conceit with a system, on which its security essentially depends, but that they will assist with temper and moderation, in discussions which are to give a more perfect form to a measure, whose object it is to promote the effectual exertions of a loyal people in defence of their Sovereign and Constitution. I earnestly entreat gentlemen not to consider the system as fugitive or temporary, but as a great instrument of permanent security, every step of the progress of which, should be watched and gradually corrected, in order to form a more perfect system; for it must be considered as a measure of the greatest importance to the present interests of the empire, and one on which its future security and salvation is principally to depend.

Sir *William Young* expressed his disapprobation in general of the whole of the system by which the volunteer force of the country was constituted and governed. His Majesty was, by law, invested with the high privilege of commanding the exertions, and exacting the services of every one of his subjects; and this, his undoubted prerogative, seemed to be questioned, or at least rendered abortive by the general defence act; for in its consequences it tended to paralyze the operation of that particular prerogative. He censured the principle of exemption, and the practice of extending those privileges to the great mass of the population of the country, which, by the former laws, were only claimable by persons under peculiar circumstances. The lamentable result of this principle, he might say of general exemption, was, that the recruiting service, whether for the army or even for the militia, was completely cut up, both root and branch; and all the vigour and activity of the country were protected and locked up, as it were, from the defence of the empire, at the most momentous crisis in which it was ever placed. Three fourths, at least of the people, of such part of them as would have enrolled themselves in the militia, or enlisted into the army, were, by the ill-considered measure of the 11th of August sheltered against that prerogative, almost coeval with the monarchy, of being required in time of peril, to come forward in defence of their country. The hon. member called emphatically on his Majesty's ministers, and particularly on

the Secretary of State, to recover that high ground on which they stood previous to the 11th of August. He called on them to unfetter the hardy and gallant population of the country, and to subject every man, indiscriminately, to be required to contribute every exertion he was capable of to defend the constitution. He even wished to see the good old system revived as practised in the reign of Henry the Eighth, when the flower of the English youth was to be seen on the sabbath day exercising with the bow and arrow, and the other military weapons then in use. This was a duty to which they were compellable by particular statutes: and he could see no great impropriety at the present day, of compelling every man capable of bearing arms, of being trained to the exercise of the musket. Were such an wholesome and excellent practice revived, then, indeed, he should have no hesitation in saying, that the armed force of this empire would not only prove a terror to the French, but might bid defiance to the combined hostility of all Europe. He would not at present, make any opposition to the motion of the right hon. Secretary, but reserved to himself the privilege of arguing it fully and minutely hereafter. He, above all things, conjured the House not, by any acts of theirs, to lock up all the population (when he said all, he meant the active portion of it) from serving in the militia and the army.—The question was then put, and carried. The Secretary at War, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and other members of his Majesty's Privy Council, were ordered to prepare and bring in the bill.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, February 9.

[MINUTES.]—The House met at half past three o'clock. On counting over the House at four, it appeared that 142 members were present, and they forthwith proceeded to a ballot for a Committee, to try the merits of the petitions complaining of an undue election and return for the borough of Windsor. The gentlemen composing the Committee are, Hon. J. Scott, Hon. H. Lascelles, J. Ferguson, Esq., Hon. E. Lascelles, J. Lubbock, Esq., G. Porter, Esq., J. Faue, Esq., Hon. R. Curzon, Hon. C. Norton, J. W. Willett, Esq., F. Burton, Esq., Sir H. W. Dashwood, Bart., W. Baldwin, Esq.; Nominées, C. Dundas, Esq., W. S. Bourne, Esq.—Sir J. Anderson brought up the report of the Committee on the London port bill; the amendments were agreed to, and the bill ordered to be engrossed.—He also

brought up the bill for enabling the West India dock company to raise a further sum of money for completion of their works. Read a first time.—Colonel Stanley brought up a petition from the town and corporation of Liverpool, praying leave to bring in a bill for the erection of a ferry-house. Referred to a Committee. The Committee of the whole House on the mutiny bill was postponed to this day se'nnight.—The Portugal seed corn exportation indemnity bill passed through a Committee. Report ordered to be received to-morrow.

[MIDDLESEX ELECTION COMMITTEE].—Lord Marsham reported from the Middlesex Committee, that it had not been able to proceed to business this day, in consequence of the absence of Benj. Walsh, Esq. a member of said Committee, which had been occasioned by indisposition, and that a medical gentleman was ready to verify the same upon oath at the bar.—Dr. Armstrong stated, that he had been to visit Mr. Walsh about three o'clock, when he found him much better; that he was then informed that Mr. Walsh had been so violently affected with a cholera morbus in the morning, as to be unable to leave his house; but that he expected he should be able to attend his duty to-morrow.—Mr. Walsh was then, on the motion of Lord Marsham, excused for his absence.

[STIRLING PETITION.]—Mr. Creevey made a motion, that the order for taking the Stirling petition into consideration on the 1st of March should be discharged, to await the decision of the House of Lords on an appeal from an adjudication of the Court of Session in Scotland, relative to certain persons who voted at that election. The application he made on the part of Sir R. Abercromby, and as no inconvenience could ensue to any of the parties, he trusted the House would have no difficulty to accede to his motion.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer was not aware of any objection to the motion of the hon. member, but as it was usual to precede such motions with notices, he thought the regular course of proceeding should not be departed from. It could not interfere with the object of the hon. member to fix his motion for a future day, and the House and the parties would thereby have an opportunity of considering whether it was or was not liable to objection.—After a few observations from Mr. Curwen and Mr. Wm. Dundas, Mr. Creevey noticed his motion for to-morrow.

[MOTION FOR PAPERS.]—Mr. Thomas Grenville rose, for the purpose of offering

to the house a motion, which if he were to adhere to the usual forms of proceeding in such cases, it would be proper to submit after a previous notice. It did not, however, appear to him necessary to conform, in the present instance, to the established usage of Parliament; and he was confident the House would concur with him in that opinion, when put in possession of the words of his motion. His object in making it was to have certain papers laid upon their table to which members could regularly refer on all occasions, as official documents. The papers he alluded to were, copies of the correspondence between his Majesty's Secretaries of State by letters called circular, and the Lords Lieutenants of the different counties of Great Britain. Every one of these letters had been printed and circulated, by order of his Majesty's government, for which reason, he could neither conceive any objection that could possibly be made to laying them on the table, nor did he suppose a notice of his motion necessary. The papers contained all the directions of his Majesty's ministers, for the regulation and establishment of the volunteer corps, as well as for the better training and disciplining the people under the general defence act, and would be found useful documents to which to refer in discussions concerning these subjects. He believed he was correct in stating, that all these letters had been printed. The House would, therefore, see that if he departed in this instance from the usual practice, it was on an occasion which bore no resemblance to the ordinary cases in which motions are made for the production of papers. If he should understand from such of his Majesty's ministers as were in the House, that his motion would not be resisted, it would not be necessary for him to occupy more of the time of the House than barely to move, "That there be laid before the House, copies of all the circular letters, written since the commencement of the present war, by any of his Majesty's Secretaries of State to the Lords Lieutenants of the different counties in Great Britain, respecting the establishment and regulation of volunteer corps, and respecting other measures for the defence of the country, and for the better execution of the acts of the last session of Parliament,"—Ordered.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, February 10.

Mr. Romilly and Mr. Adam were heard

as counsel for the appellants in the appeal from the Court of Session in Scotland, Lady Christiana Graham, against C. Hope Weir, Esq. The further consideration was delayed till Monday.—Lord Hawkesbury presented a petition from Lieutenant Alexander Home of the royal navy, claiming the Marchmont peerage.—Lord Grenville said, that previous to the recess he had given notice of his intention to make a motion relative to the issues of bank paper, so far as connected with the safety of the country. He now intimated that it was his intention to submit that question to the consideration of the House on Friday next, and moved that the House be summoned for that day. Ordered.—The House adjourned till Monday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, February 10.

[MINUTES].—Sir John William Anderson brought up the report of the Committee to whom was referred the petition of Messrs. Boydells, which was read and agreed to, and leave was given to bring in a bill to enable Messrs. Boydells to dispose of their collection of pictures, drawings, and engravings; and also of their leasehold premises in Pall Mall, commonly called the Shakespeare Gallery, by way of chances. Sir J. W. Anderson and Sir W. Curtis, were ordered to prepare and bring in the same.—Mr. Secretary Yorke brought in a bill to consolidate and amend the three acts of the 42nd and 43rd of his present Majesty respecting the volunteers; and to make further regulations, &c. This bill was read a first time, ordered to be read a second time on Wednesday next, and to be printed.—The copies of the correspondence, &c. respecting the volunteers which have been already printed, were, on the motion of Mr. Yorke, ordered to be printed.—Mr. Creevey gave notice that he would, on this day se'nnight, move for the production of certain papers respecting the island of Ceylon.—The London Wet Docks Bill was read a third time and passed.—The report of the Portugal Corn Bill was brought up, agreed to, and the bill ordered to be read a third time to-morrow.—A person from the Bank of England presented an account of the receipt and expenditure of 6,287,941l. by the commissioners for the reduction of the national debt for one year, from the 1st of February, 1803, to the 31st of January,

1804. Also an account of the receipt, &c. of 1,587,825l. for one quarter, from the 1st of February, to the 1st of May, 1803. Ordered to lie on the table.—The following are the members of the Committee appointed to try the merits of a petition against the return for the borough of Weymouth: The Hon. Richard Ryder, W. Morland, Esq. W. Dickenson, Esq. E. W. Bootle, Esq. Anthony H. Eyre, Esq. W. Mellish, Esq. T. R. Beaumont, Esq. G. P. Holford, Esq. E. Hilliard, Esq. Albemarle Bertie, Esq. C. Smith, Esq. G. W. Gunning, Esq. J. Whitmore, Esq. — Nominees. J. Calcraft, Esq. B. Hobhouse, Esq.—The Speaker announced to the House, that the clerk had laid on the table a list of the members as prescribed by the East-India Judicature Bill.

[STIRLING PETITION.]—Mr. *Creevey* rose pursuant to notice, to move that the order for a ballot on the petition respecting the election for the county of Stirling, on the 1st of March, should be discharged, and that it should be appointed for consideration on the 17th of April next. The grounds on which he made the motion the hon. Member stated to be, that a point intimately connected with that election had been decided upon by the Court of Sessions in Scotland, against which decision an appeal was made to the House of Lords. This appeal was appointed to be heard in that House on the 17th of March next, and the hon. member, therefore, expressed a hope that no objection would be offered to the postponement he proposed, particularly as it was essential to the justice of the case.

The *Speaker* asked if there was any objection on the part of the sitting member?

Sir *T. Metcalfe* said, that he was authorised by the sitting member who was absent on military business, to give his assent to the proposition. The motion was accordingly agreed to.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, February 13.

The Lord Chancellor attended at half-past three o'clock, and after prayers, by the Bishop of Exeter, were read, some routine business was disposed of, two inclosure bills were forwarded, and the appeal cause which stood for a hearing was postponed.—Several witnesses were sworn at the bar with respect to their proposed evidence before the Committee of Privileges relative to the

Zouche peerage. After which their Lordships adjourned till three o'clock to-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, February 13.

[MINUTES.]—The London Dock Bill was read a second time, and ordered to be committed.—Mr. Bond brought up copies of an order of Council respecting captures made by Lord Hood at Toulon.—A person from the Exchequer brought up an account of the permanent taxes for the years ending January, 1803, and January, 1804, distinguishing each quarter.—Mr. Secretary Yorke brought up a copy of the circular letters from the Secretary of State to the lord lieutenants of counties respecting the volunteers, which were ordered to be printed.—He also moved to postpone the second reading of the Volunteer Consolidation Bill from Wednesday to Friday next. Agreed to.—Mr. Corry then gave notice that as Wednesday was an open day, he should on that day move for the appointment of a Committee to consider of certain acts relative to the revenue of Ireland.

[SLAVE TRADE.]—Mr. *Wilberforce* said, that as it was his intention, in the course of the present session, to submit to the House a motion respecting the slave trade, it would be necessary that some information should previously be laid before the House; he therefore moved, That an humble address be presented to his Majesty, praying that he would be pleased to give directions for there being laid before the House, copies of such correspondence as may have passed between the Secretary of State, and the governors of the colonies in the West Indies, in pursuance of his Majesty's directions, issued in consequence of the address of that House to his Majesty, on the 6th of March, 1797. The motion was agreed to.—Mr. Wilberforce then moved for an account of the number of ships, with their tonnage, that had arrived from the coast of Africa, in the West Indies, between the years 1783 and 1803, with the number of negroes imported, and also the number re-exported. Agreed to.

[COTTON MANUFACTURERS.] — The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he had given notice of a motion for this day respecting the cotton manufacturers; it was a subject of great importance, and one to which the attention of the House had been for some time directed. In a concern of so ex-

tensive and complicated a nature, it was impossible but that differences must frequently arise, which required as speedy a mode of settling as possible, and that must be by the establishment of a local jurisdiction. That idea was adopted in that House, and a bill passed upon the subject. It was however afterwards found not to answer its purposes, and it soon ceased to be acted upon. In consequence of this, the cotton weavers made an application to Parliament about two years ago, and prosecuted their application the whole of that session, but from the quantity of public business then depending, no proceeding took place upon it. In the last session the subject was renewed, and a bill was brought in, but it was found impossible to bring it to a satisfactory arrangement. This led to an apprehension on the part of the weavers, that their hopes would be defeated, and he had therefore undertaken to bring the business forward in the course of the present session. This was a subject of great importance, both from the extent of the trade which was concerned, and the number of persons interested in it, and therefore, it was obvious that these disputes ought to be settled as soon as possible. It was now brought forward as a public measure, which he thought was more likely to ensure its success than if it was brought forward by either of the parties. It was under these circumstances that he was induced to bring forward this measure. He would not now express any opinion upon the mode that ought to be adopted. All he wished was, that the subject should be fairly and fully considered. If the present bill was found incapable of improvement, it would be necessary to repeal it. At present he should content himself with moving for the appointment of a committee to consider of the most effectual mode of arranging the differences between the cotton manufacturers and the persons employed by them.

Mr. *Rose* said, he wished that the attention of the House might be called to this subject, in order that there might be no further delay. The act relating to the cotton manufacturers and their servants, originated in a petition from the journeymen weavers and their masters, for the purpose of settling the disputes which had arisen between them. The bill was depending a long time, and no objection was made to it. When, however, the bill was passed and was to be carried into execution, the masters took a most extraordinary way to get rid of its operation. By the provisions of the bill an arbitrator was to be appointed to decide the disputes between the masters and journeymen: some of the masters, however,

appointed arbitrators who lived at the distance of 300 miles, and appointed a place of meeting at an equal distance, thus entirely defeating the object of the bill. The subject was again brought forward last session, and a bill was brought in, which, at the period he left town, in July, he considered to have been finally settled; it was, however, afterwards withdrawn, and the subject still remained for discussion. The cotton manufacturers, it appeared objected to any interference between themselves and their journeymen, except that of the magistrate. He saw no reason why a law might not be passed applicable to that object. In the silk trade more had been done, as the magistrates had been enabled to settle the rate of wages. This law was passed in consequence of continued disputes between the masters and workmen, in the course of which the latter had been guilty of the greatest excesses. This law might be extended to the cotton trade with much less difficulty, as in the silk trade there were above 1000 articles to become the object of the wages of workmen, whilst in the cotton trade there were not above 100. He thought the present subject was one of considerable importance, and that the consideration of it ought not to be delayed.—A Committee was then appointed in conformity with the motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

[*IRISH BANK RESTRICTION BILL.*]—Mr. *Corry* rose to move the order of the day for the House to resolve itself into a Committee upon the Irish bank restriction bill.—On the motion being put that the Speaker do now leave the chair,

Lord *Archibald Hamilton* rose to recall the attention of the house to the notice he had given on a former day, of his intention to move the introduction of a clause, imposing an obligation on the Directors of the Bank of Ireland to restrain the further issues of notes.—The noble lord then proceeded to state, that it was not his intention now to propose the clause to which he had alluded. He had made it his business to examine into the subject with the greatest care, and he had endeavoured to ascertain the sentiments of persons the best informed on matters connected with the situation of Ireland; and the result of his inquiries had been, a conviction that it would, for the present, be expedient not to press the motion. He begged leave, however, to be indulged with making a few observations, to shew that he had not taken up the idea without due consideration, or without endeavouring to avail himself of every means of correct knowledge on a subject of such vast importance and in-

terest. The present situation of the paper currency in Ireland was one which ought to excite the utmost vigilance and anxiety. It was a subject to which he had felt it his duty seriously to call the attention of ministers and of the House. The measure of restriction generally, he could not help thinking a great national evil. It struck him not only as a great but a growing calamity. It was an evil to the termination of which there was held out no reasonable prospect. It had, in the first instance, been introduced during the continuance of a war, but he could not admit, as a matter of course, that war was in itself any justification for so dangerous an expedient. We had seen it renewed during peace, and now that, unfortunately, the country was again plunged in war, there was as little hope as ever of its being abandoned. The consequence of these repeated renewals of the measure of restriction had been, that the paper currency of Ireland had increased to a most alarming extent, and the evils attendant on this increase had been manifested in a proportionate degree. These evils he had long reckoned great, but the farther he extended his researches, the more was he convinced, that they were greater than he had, in the first instance, conceived. He needed not rest any assertions on the subject of a too widely circulated paper currency on his own authority. The doctrines of Adam Smith on this point were clear and explicit, and such an authority could not be lightly regarded. Depreciation was the necessary and constant result of such extensive circulation of paper. At the time the Bank of Ireland Restriction Bill passed the Irish House of Commons, the amount of bank notes issued was 600,000*l.*, and at this moment he found that their amount was not less than 2,700,000*l.* Thus there was, by the measure of restriction, an increase to the amount of two millions. On the other hand, what was the proportion of the gold coin to be balanced against this quantity of paper money? When he allowed it to be about a million, he was sure that he went as far as any hon. member could desire. In stating its amount in this manner, he rather overrated it than estimated it below its real extent. At this time the price given for gold coin in Ireland was considerably higher than the standard price of bullion. Gold coin rose in price exactly in proportion as paper currency was depreciated in value. Betwixt Dublin and Belfast, though there was not a distance of more than a hundred miles, there was a difference of exchange to the amount of ten per cent. But the effect of the depreciation of money

was felt still more strongly on the rate of exchange betwixt this country and Ireland. For a number of years, the rate of exchange betwixt London and Dublin had fluctuated from 8 or 9 to 16 per cent. to the disadvantage of Ireland. But now the loss was far more considerable. It was as high as 17, 18, and even 19 per cent. In some instances it was not less than 20; and thus an Irish gentleman who came to attend his duty in Parliament, found, at the end of his journey, where he had allotted 500*l.* for his expenses, that 400*l.* only were really to be received. This was a view of the subject which could not fail to make a very powerful impression, and shewed in the clearest point of view what was the consequence of protracting the measure of restriction. On this point he should have felt himself very happy at receiving any information from the right hon. member who brought forward the motion, as to the probable period when the bill would be discontinued. He would be glad to be told, under what circumstances it was that the payments in cash were to be resumed. It was not easy to ascertain what was to be the situation of the country when the restriction should be removed. It was evident that the payment of cash would not be resumed without a certain degree of difficulty and danger. There would in all probability be a run on the bank for some time and consequences of a serious nature might be experienced, unless means were taken to counteract them. The longer, however, the restriction was continued, the greater would be the eventual danger, and the more difficult would it be to counteract it. From a retrospect of the past, the hope of the removal of the restriction could not be sanguine; and he appealed to the candour of those gentlemen who voted for the bill at its first introduction, whether they would have given such a vote, if they had then looked to this protracted continuance of the bill. He conjured gentlemen to think seriously on this point, and to use every exertion to procure a remedy for a very alarming evil.—The subject of the Irish silver currency was well worthy of their attention. He appealed to the right hon. gent. whether it was not in a situation absolutely disgraceful and degrading. He had felt it his duty to make these few observations, and hoped that those whose duty it was to look more particularly into the affairs of Ireland, would lose no time in devising some means for curing the evils now necessarily connected with the currency of that part of the united kingdom.

Mr. Corry applauded in the highest terms

the candour which the noble Lord had discovered on the present occasion. The object to which he had called the attention of the House was one of the highest interest and importance, particularly to those whose duty it was to watch over the interests of Ireland. He thanked the noble lord for the care which he had bestowed on it. He could declare for himself, and he believed he might add in behalf of all those gentlemen who represented Ireland, that they would at all times be happy to see Irish affairs discussed by gentlemen from all parts of the empire, and more particularly when they were handled with that temperance which the noble lord had evinced. As the notice of the noble Lord was to be relinquished, he did not conceive that it would be regular for him to go into any detail on the topics which had been introduced. He would, however, make a few general observations. With many of the remarks of the noble lord he entirely coincided. The state of the paper currency of Ireland was doubtless deplorable in the highest degree, and nothing could afford him greater satisfaction than the prospect of any means of redressing evils, which all parties admitted to exist. A good deal had been said on the extent of paper currency in Ireland, and the conduct of the Bank of Ireland had been described as highly reprehensible, because they had extended their issues of paper with such improvident liberality. It was true that Ireland was inundated with a profusion of paper, but this was not the fault of the Bank Directors. They had no control over the issuing of notes by private banks of the metropolis, or by private banks in various parts of the country. It was by the possession of this control here, that the bank was effectually enabled to restrain circulation of notes beyond what appeared expedient. For the enormous circulation of paper money in Ireland, the Bank Directors were not fairly responsible; but there were positive circumstances to be adduced in their favour. In the year when the restriction first took place, the Bank received an addition of capital to the amount of half a million. Previous to the restriction, specie had disappeared from year to year, and private bankers had been prohibited from issuing notes under five guineas value. The consequence was, that a new issue of small notes became necessary to fill up the deficiencies occasioned by this prohibition. Additional issues of notes were further rendered expedient from the accumulation of taxes, and from a variety of local causes. In this state of things, the Bank Directors had issued notes to a great amount, but it did not follow that their con-

duct in this respect was criminal. With regard to the prohibition against issues of cash being continued, it was not necessary for him to take up the time of the House. The noble lord did not oppose the motion for the House going into the committee; and, indeed, the principle on which the restriction was to be continued was the simplest in the world. Its continuance was absolutely essential, as long as the restriction continued in this country. To compel the Bank of Ireland to issue cash when the restriction continued here would be equally impolitic and unjust. It would, indeed, be an arrangement impracticable. The bill for restricting the issues of cash by the Bank of Ireland, was in fact, a bill auxiliary to, and co-existent with, the bill for a similar purpose here. The noble Lord had asked him, under what circumstance he thought that this restriction should cease? To this question he had only to answer generally, that it would cease as soon as the restriction on the Bank of England should be removed. He did not mean, indeed, by making this declaration, at all to compromise himself on the subject. At present, he saw nothing in the state of Ireland which at all disposed him to think that this would not be the case. It was impossible, however, to know what unforeseen circumstances might prevent what he now thought an event that would naturally follow the termination of the restriction act in this country. He had already alluded to the large amount of paper currency issued by the Bank of Ireland, and the noble lord had contrasted this with the issues of the Bank of England, since the restriction act passed. It was supposed that the paper issued by the Bank of England was nearly doubled since the restriction took place; whereas the issues by the Bank of Ireland was four times greater than when the restriction bill passed. On this point he had to remark, that it was not a fair way of determining the criminality or policy of these issues merely by their extent. In determining this question, the extent of the capital was to be materially attended to. In speaking of the extent of capital, the question turned on the nature and extent of security. On the other hand, if the propriety of these issues was canvassed, the criterion must be of a different description. Nothing positive appeared to shew, that the Bank Directors had carried their issues to an unwarrantable extent. In saying this, he wished the question to be left fully open to future discussion. The fact was, that when the bill passed in Ireland, it was carried, as it were, by acclamation. No investigation took place of the situation of

the Bank, or the conduct of the directors. The bill was carried through the House from a conviction, that it was rendered absolutely indispensable, after the passing of the restriction act by the Parliament of England. He had only to express a hope, that the motion might not be now retarded from any considerations of the general question, which it would be equally competent for every gentleman to bring under discussion on a future day.

Lord *Henry Petty*, in a maiden speech, delivered his sentiments on the subject before the House to the following purport. He was convinced that his noble friend who introduced the subject was perfectly correct in the observations which he had made on the motion for going into the Committee, and thought him entitled to the thanks of the House for the manner in which he had brought it under consideration. He allowed, that the amount of the issues of paper money by the Bank of Ireland was not itself a fair criterion for judging of the propriety of this increased circulation. It was, however, a circumstance which could not fail to excite surprise, and certainly loudly demanded inquiry, that the issues of paper by the Bank of Ireland had been five times greater, since the restriction bill had been passed than they previously were, whereas the issues by the Bank of England had, in proportion to the capital, increased only in the proportion of one-fifth beyond what they were when the act was passed. It might be true, that the directors of the Bank of Ireland might not hold themselves subject to responsibility for this extraordinary increase of their paper; but, surely, that House was responsible, after committing to these directors a power as extensive as ever was committed to a public body, the power of manufacturing paper for national circulation. This was indeed a great delegation of authority, for all economists agreed that money was power. When such powers were delegated, it was, undoubtedly, the duty of Parliament, to see in what manner they were exerted, to ascertain what were the evils connected with the system on which they acted, and to adopt such remedies as appeared most adapted to their situation. He did not mean to say that this was a subject to be entered on rashly, or that the investigation of it did not require the utmost temperance and moderation. Still, however, he had no difficulty in declaring, that the discussion of it was highly expedient, and that this discussion might be attended with the most beneficial effects. It was a subject

which ought strongly and deeply to impress the minds of the members of that House. The depreciation of paper in Ireland was constantly increasing, and must, as long as it existed, be productive of the most alarming consequences. The balance of trade must continue unfavourable to Ireland as long as the depreciation continued, and the merchant must continue to resort to the foreign market instead of home manufacture. The present depreciation could not be described as arising from any thing in the commerce of the country for the last year; because, during that year, the exports of Ireland had considerably exceeded the imports; but even if it were the case, it was an evil inseparable from the continuance of the restriction. As long as the merchants could obtain accommodation from the Bank by the issues of paper, and as long as the Bank found it advantageous to give this accommodation, no favourable change in the state of the exchange could be expected. The whole trade and property of Ireland was threatened with danger, if a change of system did not take place. This danger was already visible in a variety of circumstances. Since the time of the restriction, the Bank had increased its dividends full one and a half per cent. At this time their dividends amounted to one and a half per cent.; and he was assured that this year they had determined to give an additional bonus of five per cent. Under these circumstances, the Bank had not only no motive to wish for the removal of the Restriction Act, but found it their interest to extend the circulation of their paper currency. He had to repeat, that, at this time, he thought it would be dangerous for Parliament to interfere without mature consideration; but he was most clearly of opinion that some strong measure ought without delay to be adopted. The measure which struck him as being best calculated to prevent the growth of this evil, was a plan for compelling the directors to curtail their issues of paper money, and thus forcing the private bankers to adopt a similar practice. At present, the Bank of Ireland had no controul over the private Bankers, two of whom in Dublin issued paper to an amount as great as the whole of their paper circulation. His lordship concluded by again pressing the subject generally on the attention of ministers.

Mr. *Vansittart* professed, on the part of his Majesty's ministers, the utmost readiness to adopt any measure that might appear calculated to remove the evil complained of. The noble lords themselves who lamented it so strongly, and who had pointed it out so forcibly, suggested no remedy which was likely to be practical or effectual.

Mr. *Foster* expressed great satisfaction at the manner in which the affairs of Ireland had been taken up by the two noble lords who had spoken in the course of the debate. With regard to the bill before the House, it was so necessary a consequence of the restriction bill, that he considered it impossible not to enact it. At the same time he could not help pointing out some of the effects which it naturally produced in Ireland. The scarcity of specie in Ireland was well known: they had no gold in circulation but what was bought at a premium; silver there was none. He did not believe there was one real shilling to be found from one end of Ireland to the other; there was even a scarcity of brass. The effect which this want of gold produced upon trade was obvious. In the north of Ireland where payments were made all in gold, it was necessary to purchase guineas at a premium of 2s. 4d. which was above 10 per cent. The linen manufacturers could only buy their materials with guineas for which they paid this enormous price, which they were of course obliged to lay upon the price of their manufactures; this would render them unable to meet foreigners in foreign markets, and if some remedy was not administered, the trade could not stand. In addition to all this, there was a duty of 4 per cent. upon the importation of the article. Another effect this measure had was upon the exchange of Ireland: this certainly was not a very easy subject to investigate, but it undoubtedly was the duty of Parliament to enter, as soon as possible, into an investigation into the state of the circulation in Ireland. He knew Parliament could not remedy this evil by a law, but if there were any artificial causes operating to produce this effect, they surely might be got rid of. He sincerely hoped the subject would be taken up, particularly by some gentlemen on the treasury bench, and he was sure the result would be favourable to the trade of Ireland, and consequently to the trade of the empire.

Mr. *H. Thornton* said, this subject was certainly of great importance, but at the same time, he thought it was more simple than gentlemen in general seemed to imagine. It appeared to him clear, that the excess of paper circulation was the cause of the bad state of exchange in that country. It had been stated, in the course of the debate, that there was a difference of no less than ten per cent. in the exchange between different parts of Ireland, and it had been stated, that gold was purchased in the north, at a premium of ten per cent., and he was authorized to take this for granted, as it had

not been denied by any gentleman. There was a material difference that gentlemen should all keep in view between the banks of England and Ireland: in Ireland there was no bank that took upon itself to manage and regulate the circulation of the country; whereas in England, it was perfectly well known that the bank commanded the whole paper circulation of the metropolis, and regulated that of the kingdom. The bank of Ireland was instituted after a great deal of opposition, and the private banks succeeded in obtaining permission to remain in the same state that they were before the national bank was established, and consequently had the power of issuing their paper for the circulation both of the metropolis and the country. In England, there was no bank in the metropolis that interfered with the paper of the national bank; though the paper issued by the private banks in Dublin was, he had no doubt, upon very good security, yet, as they were not now bound to pay their own paper in specie, it naturally must be their interest to have as much of their paper in circulation as they could. The great object, therefore, which he wished to obtain, would be, if possible to limit the circulation of private banks; another remedy which he thought might be applied, would be to make Irish bank paper exchangeable for that of the bank of England. At all events, this was a subject that called for the most serious attention of Parliament; and he had no doubt but that upon investigation, some effectual remedy might be found out. With respect to the bill now before the House, he did not mean to oppose it, but he thought its duration should be limited to a short time, in order that the subject might necessarily be again brought under the consideration of Parliament. He would not take up more of the time of the House at present, except merely to repeat the opinion he had before advanced, that the bad state of exchange in Ireland, arose from the too great circulation of paper.

Lord *Castlereagh* would make but a few observations, in reply to what had fallen from the hon. member who had just sat down. It seemed to be the opinion, on all sides of the House, that the measure before it should be passed into a law, as the restriction of the issues of specie in England rendered a similar restriction unavoidable in Ireland. He did not, however, consider the subjects which had been introduced into the discussion, as at all connected with the limitation of the operation of the measure. They formed a question which might be taken up as a subject of separate inquiry, if the investiga-

tion should be deemed expedient. As to what had fallen from the right hon. gent. (Mr. Foster), he could not go so far as to say he differed altogether from him, though he certainly entertained doubts of the justice of his positions. The question was of extreme delicacy, and of the most abstruse nature; and it was of considerable consequence to ascertain clearly, whether the evils allowed to exist, were capable of a parliamentary remedy. The House should not lightly overstate the impression it had of the nature and extent of those evils. Considerable disadvantages would follow from carrying such an impression beyond the truth, or what the fact would bear out. The right hon. gent. had stated, that the rate of exchange was considerably greater between Dublin and London, than between the north of Ireland and London, and that the depreciation of the paper currency had been the cause. He doubted himself that fact, though he concurred with his right hon. friend, that the great issue of paper, tending to depreciate its value, was not to be charged altogether upon the bank of Ireland, as the private banks were equally liable to the observation. There were still good reasons to conclude, that the evil complained of arose not more from a depreciation of the value of paper, than from a rise in the value of gold above its just standard. He agreed with the right hon. gent. (Mr. Foster), that the commercial transactions in the north of Ireland were carried on with gold. The habits and feelings of that part of the kingdom continued the same as when both the national banks paid in specie, and, therefore, when no gold was issued, when the ordinary means of obtaining it were cut off by the restriction, the effect was, that while they continued to carry on their business by means of gold, they were obliged to pay the price set upon it by those who had it in their possession. As the demand for guineas increased, they of necessity acquired a greater local, fictitious value; and while the restriction continued on the banks, and the apprehension from invasion induced those possessing specie to hoard it up, the fact could not be otherwise. He thought so strong an imputation should not be cast rashly upon the bank, which, like all other public companies, depended principally on its credit, as to suppose, that it had abused the discretion vested in it, by increasing its issue of paper to such an extent as to depreciate the value of paper ten per cent.—As to the effect on the industry of the north, he looked upon that to be a question of great delicacy. He could not, however, conceive, that it would have the effect of embarrassing

the linen manufacturers in foreign markets. If gold were necessary in a bargain, the bargain must necessarily be delayed till the gold could be procured, and in all cases of bargains prospectively made, the terms must necessarily be regulated according to the medium of the purchase. The medium in this case being intelligible to both parties, no inconvenience could be felt by either and whatever advance was made to the producer, was necessarily charged upon the consumer. It was not so with regard to contracts previously existing, as in the case of rent. There it would make a considerable difference to the landlord, whether paid in specie or paper, while such a difference existed in their relative value. He had risen merely to state his doubts, whether the premium of 2s. 4d. was occasioned in that part of the country, so much by a depreciation of paper, as by an extraordinary rise in the value of gold, and he stated thus much as doubt, rather than as difference of opinion. He had also some doubts whether any remedy can be applied, and he was sure Parliament would be much embarrassed in restraining private banks. As to the state of internal industry, there appeared to him no ground for gloomy apprehensions. He remembered, when in the Irish government, that the constant complaint was of the discount paid for specie, particularly by the soldiery; now the soldiery were increased, and the industry of the country formed another drain on specie, while the means of procuring it were altogether cut off. The case might be made a subject of special inquiry, but was not in the present instance fairly under the consideration of the House.

Mr. Foster, in explanation, stated, that the linen bleachers were obliged to give 2s. 4d. for every guinea, in order to have gold for payment to the linen weavers, and this amounted to 10 per cent. on the manufacture, more than before the restriction. He should mention a fact in the recollection of the noble lord, which would illustrate that observation. About four months ago, the linen manufacturers held a meeting at Armagh, which they afterwards adjourned to Dungannon, for the purpose of bringing bank of Ireland notes into circulation, in which they had failed, though the meeting had been attended by above one hundred of the most respectable manufacturers, and they had agreed unanimously in their resolutions, to remove this incumbrance of ten per cent. over and above the four per cent. on exportation. This charge must unavoidably affect the foreign markets, for while Irish manufacturers continued subject to it, there can

be no question that they will be undersold in any market where they have a competition with German, Prussian, or Russian manufactures, not subject to such an impost. He should add one remark, that the discussion, though irregular, had already produced some advantages. Many things had come out, which would lead to future discussion. The bank of Ireland was a respectable company, and ought not to have an imputation cast upon it without investigation, or an opportunity of justification. Another point regarded the private banks. These circumstances called for investigation. Much light had been acquired: much more would be thrown on the subject by future discussions. It would be for the House, in its wisdom, after mature and full investigation, to apply the necessary remedy. If no remedy should be found practicable, Parliament would have the consciousness and satisfaction of having done its duty; and the unfortunate sufferers would submit with resignation to evils for which the legislature could devise no remedy.

Lord *Castlereagh*, in explanation said, that the loss sustained by the linen manufacturer of Ireland, in consequence of being obliged to pay a premium of 2s. 4d. for a guinea, was somewhat ideal, as he was enabled to indemnify himself for that loss, by drawing upon his credit either at Dublin or London.

Mr. *Corry*, in explanation, said, that his Majesty's ministers had not been wanting in their duty with respect to the circulation of Ireland, as with their concurrence he brought in a bill last session, to put a stop to the circulation of what were called silver notes in that country. In order, however to give the Irish members an opportunity of discussing the subject, the bill was not to take effect till the first of January in the present year. The members from that country were, however, precluded from attending by their military duties, in consequence of which a bill was brought in, in the present session, to suspend the operations of the former bill, in order to give the Irish members an opportunity of amply and fully discussing the state of the circulation in Ireland.

Mr. *Johnson* meant merely to point out one fact, which would put down completely all the ingenuity which the noble lord (*Castlereagh*) had employed to get rid of the remark of the hon. gent. opposite (Mr. *Thorn-ton*), that the excessive issue of paper had depreciated so greatly its value in Ireland. If the noble lord's statement were just, then it would follow, that gold had risen as paper had fallen, and 5 per cent. would be the proportion in both cases. Bullion, which might

be coined into specie, could be procured in this country at par, and conveyed to Ireland at less than one and a half per cent. The enhancement of gold above that charge, therefore, he contended, was attributable solely to the excessive issue of paper. The hon. gent. thought that the House should, by limiting the operation of the bill to a short period impose on itself the duty of resuming the subject, rather than by extending its operation, leave the revival of the question to the industry or discretion of individual members.

Lord *Castlereagh* denied, that he had fixed any proportion. He had only maintained that there were grounds to suppose the discount, or rate of exchange, was attributable to two causes, the diminished value of paper, and the increased value of coin. If gold is coined, as it certainly might be, from bullion, then must they come here to find the market price of bullion. This, he believed, to be above the standard coin of the country. To this price, such as it might be, must be added the expense of coining and carriage.

Lord *Dunlo* entered his protest against the suggestion of the hon. gent. opposite (Mr. *Johnson*), that the duration of the measure should be limited to a shorter period than was proposed. He knew not where the hon. gent. had learned that bullion could be conveyed to Ireland at so small an expense. He remembered a transaction some time since when considerable difficulty was felt on an occasion of procuring part of a loan from this country, before a contract for the conveyance of the bullion could be effected. Three per cent. had, in some instances, been refused by several monied persons, though the contract had been afterwards concluded at two per cent. Being on his legs, he congratulated the House on the temper and moderation with which the discussion had been continued, and he trusted, that the matter would not rest there, but that a Select Committee would be appointed to investigate it thoroughly. When that should be undertaken, he hoped, that the investigation would be general, and comprehend the silver coinage; for he concurred with his right hon. friend, that there was not a single genuine mint shilling in Ireland. He thought that the act of last session for prohibiting the issue of silver, or small notes, had been judiciously suspended, because the responsibility of bankers was a better security to the public, than the base coin in circulation.

Mr. *Alexander* agreed that the silver currency was wretched. Considerable inconvenience had been felt from the circum-

stance that paper was not considered a legal tender, and the courts even had not ventured to decide the question. The landlords in the north of Ireland insisted on gold, while those in the interior, in the southern and western provinces, were satisfied with bank notes. If the landlords of England were pending the restriction on the bank, to insist on gold in payment of their rents, he contended that the same inconveniencies would be felt in this country, and to the same extent, as are now felt in Ireland. Another circumstance which contributed greatly to the increase of the circulation of paper was, that the bank of Ireland discounted at one per cent. under the legal interest, whilst the private banks, by discounting at the legal interest, had thereby an advantage of 1 per cent. The consequence was, that they kept discounting offices in parts of the country, even the least commercial, and deluged the kingdom with their notes.—The question was then put, that the Speaker do leave the chair, and the House having gone into the Committee, the blanks were filled up, and the report ordered to be received to-morrow.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, February 14.

Several witnesses were examined for the claimant on the Zouche Peerage—other witnesses were sworn and the farther consideration of the claim was deferred till Thursday.—Certain accounts relative to the issues of Irish Bank Paper were laid on the table, by Lord Hawkesbury; which, on the motion of Lord King, were ordered to be printed.—Adjourned till Thursday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, February 14.

[MINUTES].—Sir W. Pulteney presented a petition from the governors and directors of the Bank of Scotland, praying for leave to bring in a bill to enable that Bank to augment its capital.—Referred to a Committee.—The honourable H. Lascelles presented a petition from the woollen cloth manufacturers of the county of York, complaining that they did not enjoy the advantages of those of Gloucester, and praying to be put on the same footing with those of that country.—Referred to a committee.—Mr. Alexander brought up the report of the committee on the Irish Bank Restriction Bill, which was agreed to. The amendments were accordingly ordered to be engrossed, and the

bill to be read a third time to-morrow.—On the motion of Mr. Corry, the committee of the whole House for the consideration of certain acts relative to the revenues of Ireland, which stood for to-morrow, was postponed till Monday next.—Mr. Adams brought in the Marine Bill, which was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time on Thursday.—Mr. White presented at the bar a list of the committee ballotted to try the merits of the Ilchester election. It consisted of the following members; Matthew Russel, Esq.; John Penn, Esq.; John Matthews, Esq.; G. W. Gunning, Esq.; R. Williams, Esq.; Hon. C. H. Pierrepont, Esq.; Sir C. Talbot, Bart.; Sir W. Young, Bart.; H. Shelley, Esq.; E. Hilliard, Esq.; Sir John Frederic, Bart.; David S. Dugdale, Esq.; C. Chester, Esq.—The Speaker stated, that according to the usual forms of the House, it was now the duty of the 13 that had been chosen by ballot, to retire for the purpose of choosing two nominees, conformably to the regulations usual in such proceedings. The Gentlemen returned the following: Sir Robert Buxton, Bart.; Hon. C. H. Hutchinson, Esq.—Who being accordingly added to the list as nominees, the committee were sworn in, in due form, and ordered to proceed to business. The house then adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday February 15.

[MINUTES].—A ballot took place this day for a committee to try the merits of the petition, complaining of an undue return for the Borough of Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire. The following members were appointed: Sir J. D. King, Bart.; Sir W. Lemon, Bart.; G. T. Stewart, Esq.; F. J. Brown, Esq.; J. Smith, Esq. of Wendover: Sir G. Cornewall, Bart.; John Hammett, Esq.; Sir Jacob Astley, Bart.; Pascoe Grenfell, Esq.; Sir H. Inglis, bart.; John Buller, Esq.; Lord Ossulston; Ed. B. Portman, Esq.—Those gentlemen having, pursuant to the Speaker's direction, retired to choose two nominees, returned the following names:—Sir M. B. Folkes, Bart., C. W. Wynne, Esq.—The committee proceeded to business forthwith.—Mr. Secretary Yorke presented a general abstract of the several sub-division returns of the volunteers, under the act of the 43d of his Majesty. Ordered to lie on the table.—Sir Jacob Astley presented a petition from the land owners, barley growers, and maltsters of the county of Norfolk against the additional malt duties. Ordered to lie on the

table.—Mr. Windham presented a petition from the noblemen, gentlemen, &c. who are subscribers to the Veterinary college, stating the importance of the institution, the inadequacy of their funds, and praying parliamentary aid. This was ordered to lie on the table; as was a petition, containing a similar prayer, from the Board of Agriculture, and which was presented by Mr. Foster.—Mr. Vansittart brought up the report of the committee to whom was referred the appointment of a list of members, &c. according to the East India Judicature Bill, which was read and the report ordered to be considered to-morrow in a committee of the whole House.—Sir Jacob Astley presented a petition from the debtors confined in the county gaol of Norwich, which was ordered to lie on the table.—Colonel Calcraft presented a petition from certain persons, praying for leave to bring in a bill for constructing a pier and making other improvements in the Bay of Carnarvon. This petition was referred to a private committee.—The committees of Supply and Ways and Means were postponed till Friday; and the House adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, February 16.

The House resolved itself into a committee of privileges; and Lord Walsingham having taken the chair, the consideration of Sir Cecil Bishop's claim to the Zouche Peerage was resumed.—Several witnesses were examined in support thereof, and Mr. Cazely addressed the committee at some length on behalf of the claimant.—Their lordships adjourned the further consideration of the case till Tuesday next.—The House then resumed, and the space below the bar was cleared while prayers were reading.—During the time of the exclusion of strangers, Lord Grenville, we understand, moved that the order for summoning the House, relative to his intended motion of to-morrow, respecting the paper circulation as connected with the general defence of the country, be discharged, and the order was discharged accordingly.—The hearing of the Appeal Cause, *Graham v. Weir*, which stood for this day, was postponed.—Adjourned till to-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, February 16.

[MINUTES].—At half past three o'clock, the House proceeded to ballot for a committee, to try the merits of the petition complaining of an undue election for Malden. The

members chosen to form the committee, were, Hugh Leicester, Esq.; Ed. Morris, Esq.; William Egerton, Esq.; Hon. Cropley Ashley; Lord George Aug. Henry Cavendish, Marquis of Titchfield; Right Hon. W. Windham; Right Hon. C. Long; Honourable Charles James Fox; Lord Robert Spencer; Henry Bankes, Esq.; J. Sargent, Esq.; N. Vansittart, Esq.—Nominees, Robert Steele, Esq.; Thomas Creevey, Esq.—Mr. Secretary Yorke said, he was under the necessity of moving to discharge the order which stood for to-morrow for the second reading of the Volunteer Bill, on account of some papers which it would be necessary to lay before the House not being yet printed; he then moved that it should be read a second time on Wednesday next.—The committee on the Marine Mutiny Bill was put off till Monday.—Dr. Duigenan gave notice that he should to-morrow move for leave to bring in a bill respecting Notaries Public in Dublin, and that on Monday he should move for a bill to regulate the time at which persons may be admitted to Priests Orders in Ireland.—The committee on the Duke of Yorke's Estate Bill was put off till this day se'nnight.—Adjourned.

[GREENLAND FISHERY].—Mr. Vansittart moved the order of the day for the House to resolve itself into a committee to consider of the acts relative to the Greenland Fishery. The House having resolved itself into a committee, Mr. Vansittart said, that a bounty was always granted to the Owners of ships employed in the Greenland Fishery in time of peace, upon condition of their having a certain number of British seamen on board; this was done with a view to encourage the nursery of British seamen; but in time of war the case was very different, and as it was now expedient that as many men should be got for the royal navy as possible, he should move therefore, that the chairman be directed to move for leave to bring in a bill to enable vessels employed in the Greenland Fishery to complete their number of seamen at different ports during the present season.—The motion was agreed to.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, February 17.

The House forwarded the private bills on the table, and, at half past three o'clock adjourned till Monday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, February 17.

[MINUTES].—The following members

were chosen of the committee appointed to try the merits of the petitions, complaining of an undue return for the Borough of Honiton, viz. The Hon. Wm. Broderick, R. Dallas, Esq. Sir W. M. Milner, Bart. Sir R. Lawley, Bart. G. Wood, Esq. Hon. St. A. St. John, J. Fonblanque, Esq. Wm. S. Poyntz, Esq. Viscount Hinchinbrook. Hon. J. Wm. Ward, Hon. Andrew Foley. J. Brogden, Esq. J. Lowther, Esq.—Nominees. Sir J. Newport, Bart. Wm. Best, Esq. The Committee immediately proceeded to business.—Dr. Duigenan, after a few prefatory remarks, in the course of which he took occasion to allude to the law as it exists in this part of the United Kingdom with respect to public notaries, moved for leave to bring in a bill to regulate the business of public notaries in Ireland. Leave granted.—On the motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the third reading of the Irish Bank Restriction Bill, the Committees of Supply and of Ways and Means were postponed to Monday, and the Committee on the Mutiny Bill to Thursday next.—The right hon. gent. then moved, that the House should adjourn till Monday.

[*IRISH INSURRECTION.*]—Sir J. *Wrottesley* rose, and advertising to the notice he had given of his intention to submit a motion to the House on Monday next, for the production of certain papers respecting the insurrection which took place in Dublin on the 23d of July last, observed, that this subject was not so pressing in point of time as to induce him to urge it, under the present circumstances, and he would therefore postpone it *sine die*; but yet it was of such importance that he felt it his duty to state, that he should hold himself pledged to the House and the Country to bring forward the business, as soon as the circumstances to which he had alluded shall have ceased to exist.

HOUSE OF LORDS. *Monday, February 20.*

[*MINUTES.*]—Counsel were finally heard relative to the Scotch Appeal, *Graham v. Weir*, viz. the Attorney General and Mr. Alexander for the Respondent, and Mr. Adam on behalf of the Appellant in reply. The Lord Chancellor made a few observations upon the merits of the case, and concluded by moving a proposition tending to affirm the judgment of the Scotch Court, which was ordered accordingly.—The West India Dock Bill was brought up from the Commons by Mr. Manning; and two bills of a private nature were presented by Mr. Cartwright. These bills were severally read a first time.

[*CHOLMONDELEY ESTATE BILL.*]—The order of the day was then read for summoning their lordships upon the occasion of the second reading of Earl Cholmondeley's Estate Bill.

The Lord Chancellor quitted the woolsack, and made several observations upon the peculiar nature of such bills as that before the House, and the usage of their lordships' proceedings, accompanied with a few remarks upon the special case. In the course of these observations, the noble and learned lord suggested the propriety of the introduction of a clause into the bill, for reserving the rights of the last remainder man until the period when he shall be capable of giving his consent.

Lord Alvanley made a few observations upon the case, and announced his entire concurrence with what fell from the noble and learned lord. He took occasion to applaud the care and attention which had been usually paid by noble lords who had sat upon the woolsack to such proceedings as that in question.—The Bill was then read a second time; and on the motion of Lord Walsingham, committed for to-morrow fortnight.—Some routine business was then disposed of, and their lordships adjourned till to-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, February 20.

[*MINUTES.*]—Mr. St. John, from the Committee appointed to try and determine the merits of the Honiton Election, reported that the Sitting Member, George Shum, Esq. was duly elected, and that the petition was not frivolous and vexatious.—Mr. Steele reported from the Committee appointed to try and determine the merits of the Durham Election, that R. Wharton, Esq. was not duly elected; that the Election, as far as related to the said R. Wharton, was void, and that neither the petition nor the opposition was frivolous or vexatious.—A new writ was ordered for Durham, in the room of the said R. Wharton, Esq.—Mr. Secretary Yorke moved that there be laid before the House, an account of such volunteer corps in Great Britain as have been placed upon permanent pay and duty since November, 1803. Ordered.—Mr. Secretary Yorke afterwards laid the account before the House; which was ordered to be printed.—Mr. Creevey rose to postpone the motion which he had given notice of for to-morrow, till some day next week, but he hoped that no long time would elapse before he had an opportunity of calling the serious

attention of the House to the subject.—Mr. Corry postponed his motion for a committee on the acts relative to the Irish revenue till Friday next.—A new writ was ordered for Bramber in Sussex in the room of George Sutton, Esq., deceased.—The House agreed to go into a Committee of the whole House on the Royal Marine Mutiny Bill to-morrow.—The Greenland Whale Fishery Bill was read a second time, and ordered to be committed to a committee of the whole House to-morrow.—The Committee of Supply and of Ways and Means was deferred until Wednesday.

[*IRISH BANK RESTRICTION BILL.*].—Mr. Corry moved the order of the day for the third reading of the Irish Bank Restriction Bill.

Lord Archibald Hamilton said, that after the discussion which had taken place the last time the Bill was before the House, he felt himself bound to say a few words before its final departure to the other House. Nothing certainly could be greater than the importance of this measure, not only as affecting Ireland, but because it shewed what must be the consequence in this country, if the restriction should continue to any great length of time. If he had sat silent on this occasion, it might be supposed that his opinion had been altered by the discussion which took place on the second reading; but although he paid every attention to the arguments which were used on that occasion, his sentiments still remained unchanged. It had been most clearly proved, that there was a great depreciation in the value of paper in Ireland, and that specie could only be procured with great difficulty and at a large premium; it had been urged, that the scarcity of guineas arose rather from factitious than from real causes; this he was inclined not to believe, for it was surely more probable, that paper should be depreciated, from so great a quantity having been issued, than that the price of gold should have risen so much beyond its real value. Before he sat down, he wished to mention one or two points to which he hoped he should receive an answer, or at least some explanation from the right hon. gent. opposite to him (Mr. Corry). The rate of exchange had been for some time past increasing against Ireland, and had risen so high as $19\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Notwithstanding this, it had been asserted, that the Bank of Ireland last year had given a bonus of 5 per cent. to the proprietors of bank stock; this was a subject which certainly required some explanation. There was another circumstance which he had heard, from authority on which he placed

great reliance, but which he wished at the same time to state with the greatest diffidence. The circumstance to which he alluded was this, that although the exchange was so great against Ireland, yet that the Lords of the Irish Treasury received their salaries at par. He had before stated, that he did not mean to assert this positively as a fact, but he thought it right to mention it, to give the right hon. gent. opposite to him an opportunity either of contradicting or explaining it, because, if those who might be supposed to have the greatest means of adopting measures for preventing the balance from being so strongly against Ireland felt no inconvenience from it, it might be apprehended that they would not feel much anxiety on the subject. That these evils existed, and that they required remedy, had not been denied, and, therefore, he hoped that some measures would be resorted to; the one that appeared to him the most proper would be to appoint a committee to inquire into the cause of the high state of exchange against Ireland. He lamented, that he himself could not move for such a committee, because there was another inquiry which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had expressed his intention of moving for, respecting the duty on Malt in Scotland, to which he felt himself bound to devote a great part of his attention; but he hoped it would be taken up by a right hon. gent. (Mr. Foster) whose abilities and experience eminently qualified him for the task.

Mr. Corry said, he should begin by advertising to what fell from the noble lord towards the latter end of his speech, viz., that certain officers under the Irish government being paid their salaries at par.—On this point he would give the noble lord the most full and explicit information in his power; if the noble lord had done him the honour to have acquainted him with his intention of requiring information upon that subject, he would have taken care that he should have a most distinct and precise answer. At present, however, he wished to state, that certain officers from Ireland, who were employed in this country in the discharge of their public duty, were paid their salaries at par; that the Treasury of Ireland having money in this country, had given orders for the payment of those who were officially employed in this country, including himself, the Lords of the Treasury, and the inferior officers, who were obliged to attend here during the session of Parliament, in the manner that had been stated. This practice had originated with the Union, and had been continued since, without any observation having been made upon it. With regard to what the noble lord

had stated respecting the depreciation of paper in Ireland, he had given his opinion upon that subject, not only on the last discussion on this bill, but in the course of last session. It would be remembered, that he had the honour of proposing a bill last session, which met with the approbation of the House, the object of which was, to restrain the circulation of small notes in Ireland, which bill was to commence its operation from the 1st day of this year. Finding, however, at the commencement of the present session, that the members from that part of the United Kingdom could not, in consequence of their military duties, attend in Parliament, he had proposed a bill to postpone the operation of that measure till July, in the hopes that before that time, the Irish members would be enabled to attend in their places, and that the subject might be discussed in the most ample manner. The noble lord and the House, would, therefore, he hoped, do him the justice to acknowledge, that upon this subject, he had always entertained and professed the same opinion. As to the question of the restriction on the Bank of Ireland, he supposed the noble lord did not mean to contend that the Restriction ought to be taken off there while it continued here.—[Lord A. Hamilton said, “certainly not.”—] Then the noble lord’s observation did not apply to the Bank of Ireland; they were general speculations applying to the Bank of England, and as that subject was not before the House, it was not necessary for him to enter into it. With regard to the situation of Ireland with respect to its circulation, he should certainly be happy to receive the assistance of the abilities of the noble lord, and as the subject must come again under the consideration of Parliament this session, he hoped it would meet with the most ample discussion.

Lord A. Hamilton, in explanation, disclaimed any improper motives in the observations he had thrown out.

Mr. Curwen said, that the interference of Parliament was certainly necessary to put an end to this evil, which was of very great magnitude. There appeared to him various ways in which it might be done; the two countries being united, he saw no reason why the banks should not be united; or a bill might be passed to limit the circulation of paper in Ireland. These, certainly, were delicate measures, and required much consideration; but with regard to the issue of private bank paper in Ireland, which was very great, he saw no reason why they should not be obliged to pay their notes in Bank of England paper.

Sir John Newport said, the proposition of the hon. gent. was the most extraordinary he had ever heard; if his object was to put a stop to all the private banks in Ireland, it would certainly be a very efficacious way of doing it; because it could not be supposed that an Irish banker, who issued his notes at par, could pay those notes the next day in Bank of England paper, at a loss of 18 or 19 per cent. But he did not agree with those gentlemen who attributed the balance of exchange against Ireland entirely to the restriction on the Bank of Ireland. If they would look back to the years 1795 and 1796, they would find that the exchange was very high against Ireland, although there was then no restriction on payment in specie. The cause of this balance would perhaps be more readily found in the situation of the trade of Ireland with this country. Gentlemen forgot, when they spoke upon this subject, the large amount of the absentee rents drawn from Ireland. They forgot, that since the union several large loans for that country had been negotiated in England, the interest of which, to the amount of one million and a half, was annually drawn from Ireland. The absentee rents he estimated at little less than three millions, therefore the balance of trade in favour of Ireland must be great indeed, to supply such a continual drain. It had been said, that the bank of England had a greater control over the private bankers than the Bank of Ireland had. This was a proposition he could not assent to, because the Bank of England had no other controul over the bankers except by refusing to discount their paper, and the Bank of Ireland had the same power. There was, however, a material difference between the situation of the two countries. In Ireland they had not only to combat with the general disposition of mankind to hoard specie, but there were in that country obvious causes which made that disposition almost universal. He did not speak of the North of Ireland, where trade was carried on almost all with specie, and the people had a confidence in each other, which, he was sorry to say, was not the case in the other provinces. The object of the lower classes of people in Ireland was to get specie, and the moment it was obtained it was buried, without the person so secreting it communicating it even to his wife or children; the consequence of this was, that immense quantities were lost. This disposition had produced the most fatal effects in Ireland. Tenants before they would pay their rents in specie would suffer themselves to be distrained and their cattle sold. They had no objection to pay in paper, because they

thought, in case of a successful convulsion, it would be of no value. But long before the restriction on the Bank, there was a great scarcity of specie arising from its being hoarded. He hoped, therefore, when gentlemen were discussing these subjects, they would bear in mind the great difference between the two countries, and not suffer themselves to decide too hastily upon general principles.

Mr. *Foster* said, he would not add much to the length of the discussion: he rose in consequence of what had fallen from the noble lord, to whom he paid some high compliments. He was sorry he could not undertake that which the noble lord had recommended to him, viz. to move for a committee to inquire into this subject. He trusted, however, that all that had passed upon this and a former occasion, would impress upon ministers the necessity of speedily adopting some measure for the relief of that country, and he was sure it could be done much more effectually by the gentlemen on the bench below him (the Treasury Bench) than by himself.—The bill was then read a third time; and on the motion “that the bill do pass,”

Mr. *Foster* said, he did entertain a hope, that ministers would have expressed an intention of taking up this subject, but as they remained silent, he felt the call upon him so imperiously, that he would, on a future day, bring the matter under the consideration of Parliament, at the same time he should be glad if ministers would take the task out of his hands.

[*IRISH MILITIA.*].—Mr. *Foster* called the attention of the right hon. gent. on the Bench below him (Mr. *Corry*) to the subject of the Militia of Ireland. He stated circumstances to shew that the Militia now existing in Ireland had been raised under the provision of an act of Parliament, which was made for the purpose of providing for the families of militia men in certain cases. Some of the ballotted men he knew had received the bounties. In the month of August a bill was passed to regulate and model the mode of giving bounties, and for providing for the families of militia-men, by which two shillings a week were allowed to the helpless father or helpless mother of a militia-man, and to the brother or sister one shilling per week. The militia was raised while this bill was in force. Afterwards another bill was brought into Parliament, and passed, by which the father and mother had only one shilling per week, and the brother and sister nothing. He did not say anything upon the question, whether the first allowance was too much or the second too little, but he said

that the militia was engaged on the faith of the former, and all that he wished was, that some measure should be had for keeping good faith with those men who entered under the old law, but who now could neither under the old or new law receive the bounties or subsistence to their families that they expected. The money for this purpose was to have issued in a way that was peculiar to Ireland, by officers who had the superintendence of that business, and it was to be replaced by determination of the grand juries, who were to make proper presentments for that purpose at the assizes. He mentioned this matter now, because unless some course be followed, different from what the law at present provides, the grand juries will not have such power, as they were used to have to make the presentments, nor was there any time to be lost upon this occasion, the time was short between this and the spring assizes in Ireland, which he believed would commence about the 16th or the 18th of March: therefore he hoped, that whatever measure was taken, it would be considerably before that time. He hoped that this which he should call a mistake, would be rectified.

Mr. *Corry* observed, that this was a subject on which there was a great difference of opinion in the Parliament of Ireland when it was discussed. He hardly remembered a question that was more agitated than this had been: but with regard to any amendments in the Act, or anything that might be done by way of alteration in that respect, he thought it was natural to postpone it until the Irish members were able to attend the House. Such he had thought, and did still think, the proper course in such a case as this. Whatever there was in this matter that required consideration, he was sure that his Majesty's ministers would concur with the right hon. gent. who had now mentioned it, in giving it the most effectual attention; but in the absence of most of the members for Ireland, who were attending their military duty, he should not think it respectful to them to discuss it.

Mr. *Foster* thought the right hon. gent. had misconceived his meaning; he did not desire to enter on the merits of the case, or propose a discussion of it in the House, either one way or the other: what he wished was, only that ministers would remedy an apparent breach of faith.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, February 21.

Their Lordships, pursuant to order, re-

solved into a Committee of Privileges, Lord Walsingham in the chair.—The consideration of the claim of Sir Cecil Bishop, Bart. to the Barony of Zouche, was resumed, and several witnesses were examined relative thereto.—The Lord Chancellor addressed the Committee at some length, respecting certain prominent features of the evidence. His lordship concluded by moving, "That the farther consideration of this claim be adjourned till the 17th of April next." Previous to the question being put it was permitted, with a reference to the convenience of parties, that some clerical gentlemen should be examined relative to certain registries which were to form a part of the evidence; and this proceeding took place accordingly.—The question above stated was then put, and the farther consideration of Sir Cecil Bishop's claim was accordingly adjourned to the 17th of April.—After prayers were read, the several bills before the House, most of them of a private or local description; were forwarded in their respective stages.—Among these the West-India Dock Bill was read a second time, and ordered to be referred to the consideration of an open Committee on Thursday next.—The Appeal, *McCall v. his Majesty's Advocate for Scotland*, was withdrawn by consent of parties and without costs.—The farther consideration of the important appeal from the Court of Chancery, *Thellusons v. Woodford* and others, was postponed till Monday next, and the judges were ordered to attend on the occasion. Adjourned till to-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, February 21.

This day was appointed for two ballots for Committees to try the merits of petitions complaining of undue elections for Carrickfergus and Sudbury, but there being only 88 members present at four o'clock, an adjournment of course took place till to-morrow.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, February 22.

Lord Malmesbury was introduced, and took his seat as Earl Malmesbury. He was introduced between Earls Camden and Uxbridge.—The Bishop of Clyne took the oaths and his seat.—Witnesses were sworn in the West India Dock Bill.—*Lingham's Divorce Bill* was read a first time. Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, February 22.

[MINUTES.]—Two ballots stood for this day, but the one for Carrickfergus was only obtained.—About five o'clock Mr. White appeared at the bar with the following list of names of members chosen to form the Committee:—Sir J. Wrottesley, Bart. T. Brooke, Esq., Right Hon. G. Rose, W. Praed, Esq., Sir J. Honeywood, W. Smith, Esq., J. Jekyll, Esq., P. C. Bruce, Esq., C. Chapman, Esq., J. Jarvis, Esq., G. Johnstone, Esq., D. Jephson, Esq., J. H. Durand, Esq. Nominees; H. Alexander, Esq., J. Graham, Esq.; being regularly sworn, the Committee retired to fix the time and place for their proceedings.—The second reading of the Volunteer bill was, on the motion of Mr. Secretary Yorke, deferred till Monday.—The Sheriff of London presented a petition from the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council, praying for leave to bring in a bill to explain and amend the powers granted by a former act, authorising the establishment of a coal market. The petition was referred to a committee.—Dr. Duigenan, agreeably to his notice on a former day, rose to move for leave to bring in a bill to fix the age for receiving priests orders in Ireland. The learned member made a few observations to shew the necessity of the measure. Frequent impositions took place as the law now stood. He knew of several instances where, by a fraud on the bishops, persons much under the age required by the rubrics, ordination ought to be obtained. He was proceeding to illustrate this position, when the Speaker suggested that the motion ought regularly to originate in a Committee. After a few words of explanation betwixt Mr. Francis and Dr. Duigenan, the suggestion of the Speaker was adopted, and the House agreed to resolve into the Committee to-morrow.—Mr. Blackburn presented a petition from the journeymen callico printers of Lancashire, Derbyshire, Cheshire, and certain counties of Scotland, complaining of the conduct of the masters in the said trade, in taking such an excessive number of apprentices as to throw the greater part of the journeymen out of employment. The petition stated, that this multiplication of apprentices commenced about the year 1792—and that since then the proportion of apprentices to journeymen has been generally not less than as 70 to 30. That at one house in Lancashire, 197 apprentices were reared in the course of 16 years, and that during that period no more than 95 persons, journeymen and apprentices included, were at any one time employed.

Therefore this House reared 102 persons more than it could find employment for. The petition complained of other hardships suffered by the journeymen in the said trade, and stated that it was a general practice among the masters to take apprentices without any indentures, and that the revenue upon stamps was thus materially defrauded. The petition was referred to a private committee.—Col. Howard presented a petition from certain merchants in London and Portsmouth, and proprietors of lands in Surrey, Sussex, and Hants, praying for leave to bring in a bill, enabling them to raise a sum of money for the formation of a canal betwixt London and Portsmouth. The petition was referred to a Committee.—Sir W. Geary brought in the Marine Fishing Society Bill, which was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.—A petition was presented from the magistrates and landholders of Leicestershire, praying for leave to bring in a bill to establish a new poor-rate in that county. The petition was referred to a Committee.—Several private petitions were brought in, and referred to Committees without opposition.—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, February 23.

The Earl of Arran's Estate Bill was read a first time.—The other bills on the table were forwarded. Adjourned till to-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, February 23.

[*MINUTES.*—Mr. White appeared at the bar with the following list of names on the reduced list for the Sudbury Election Committee: The Right Hon. Gen. Fitzpatrick, G. Shum, Esq. Wm. Shute, Esq. The Hon. G. Walpole, J. Fuller, Esq. Wm. Manning, Esq. J. C. Curwen, Esq. Lord Euston, Bryan Cooke, Esq. H. Joliffe, Esq. R. Deverel, Esq. C. Morgan, Esq. Sir W. Heathcote, Bart. Nominees, R. Adair, Esq. R. Hurst, Esq. Those gentlemen having been sworn, at the table, withdrew into the Committee Room to enter upon an examination of the merits of the petition they have to try.—Mr. White then presented at the bar of the House the names of the following gentlemen, who were chosen as a Select Committee on the Minehead Election Petition: Sir R. Barclay, F. Gregor, Esq. J. Langham, Esq. D. Giles, Esq. G. Porter, Esq. J. Blackburn, Esq. (of Lancashire), A. Mackenzie

Frazer, Esq. Right Hon. J. C. Villiers, Hon. H. Walpole, Hon. G. H. L. Dundas, P. Craufurd Bruce, Esq. A. Shakespeare, Esq. Lord Viscount Cranley. Nominees, Snowden Barne, Esq. Sir C. M. Pole, Bart.—The House went into a Committee to consider of the propriety of the motion of Dr. P. Duigehan, for leave to bring in a bill to specify the age at which persons are to be admitted to priests or deacons orders in Ireland. The proposition was agreed to; Mr. Alexander reported to the House upon its being resumed, and leave was given to bring in a bill agreeably to the resolution of the Committee.—The report on the Duke of York's Estate Bill was brought up, and the bill ordered to be read a third time.—Accounts were presented of the number of shipping and their tonnage, employed in the slave trade, and also the number of slaves brought from Africa, for the term specified in a motion which was lately made by Mr. Wilberforce, and agreed to by the House. Ordered to lie on the table.—Certain accounts were presented from the Auditor of the Exchequer's office, pursuant to a late order of the House, Ordered to lie on the table.—The Greenland Ships' Bill was reported, and ordered to be read a third time.—The Committee on the Mutiny Bill was postponed to Tuesday next.—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, February 24.

Counsel were heard relative to the appeal cause from the Court of Chancery in Ireland, Thomas Garde, Esq. and others *v.* Wm. Burton, Esq. Mr. Mansfield spoke at considerable length as leading counsel for the appellants. The farther hearing of the case was adjourned till Tuesday next.—The several bills before the House, chiefly of a private nature, were forwarded in their respective stages, and some private business was disposed of. The House then adjourned till Monday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, February 24.

[*MINUTES.*—Sir G. Cornwall brought up a report from the Committee appointed to try the Aylesbury Election, stating, that John Wilson one of the witnesses, had been guilty of prevarication and contradictory evidence in his deposition before the Committee. The report having been received, Sir C. Cornwall moved, that John Wilson be committed prisoner to Newgate for the

offence complained of.—Mr. White appeared at the bar with the List of members ballotted for the Committee to try the merits of the petition from the borough of Hereford. They are as follows: James Smith, Esq. Sir J. Honeywood, Bart. H. Bankes, Esq. E. Golding, Esq. J. Sargent, Esq. Sir R. Barclay, R. G. Ker, Esq. G. Vansittart, Esq. J. Scott, Esq. Sir R. Lawley, Bart. A. Eyre, Esq. St. A. St. John, Esq. J. Atkins, Esq. Nominees, Sir E. Millington, Lord G. A. Cavendish.—Dr. Duigenan brought in the bill to regulate and enforce the canons of the church in regard to the age of entering into priest's orders in Ireland. According to the canons of the united church of England and Ireland, no person can enter on deacon's orders under the age of 23, and no person on priest's orders under the age of 24. This regulation is frequently transgressed in Ireland. The object therefore of the bill is to enact, that whoever shall enter on these orders under the ages specified in the canon, shall be ever afterwards incapable of promotion in the church. It was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time on Tuesday next.—The Greenland Fishery Bill was read a third time and passed.—On the motion of Mr. Sargent, the Committee of the whole House on the Irish Revenue Acts, fixed for this day, was postponed till Monday.—The Committees of Supply and Ways and Means were likewise postponed till Monday.

[IRISH CIRCULATION.]—Mr. Foster expected that the state of circulation in Ireland would have been made the subject of inquiry, and that some motion on that subject would have been made from a quarter that was best capable of giving it effect; but as he had been disappointed in that expectation, he would not hesitate any longer to take the business upon himself. He therefore gave notice, that on Thursday next he would submit to the House a motion on that subject.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, February 27.

The bills upon the table were forwarded in their several stages.—The farther consideration of the appeal, *Thelussons v. Woodords*, was postponed.—On the order of the day being read for the further consideration of the writ of error, from the Court of King's Bench, *Mackreth v. Askew*, the Lord Chief Baron delivered the opinion of the judges at great length. Most of the judges were present. The Lord Chancellor then left the woolsack, and observed, that

four questions had been referred to the judges for their opinion; which they had now given, on the two first. If their lordships should concur with that opinion, there would be no absolute necessity, for their giving judgment in this cause, that they should hear the opinion of the judges on the other two. Yet, he thought it proper to state, that the four questions he alluded to, were so framed as to include almost every question which could arise on the Annuity Act, and that it might be useful to the course of justice, that their lordships decision should be founded on the whole view of all the questions referred to the judges, with their opinion on each. He should, therefore, move, that the further consideration of this cause be adjourned to this day week, for the purpose of their lordships' determining whether they will hear the judges on the two other questions. The motion was then put and agreed to.—Some witnesses were sworn at the bar previous to their being examined in some private bills. Adjourned till to-morrow at three o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, February 27.

[MINUTES.]—The London Dock Improvement Bill was read a third time and passed.—Mr. Bankes reported the resolution of the Committee on the Hereford election. That John Scudamore, Esq. and Thomas Powell Symonds, Esq. were duly elected, and that the petition against their election was frivolous and vexatious.—Sir M. Ridley brought up a petition from the debtors confined in the gaol of Newcastle upon Tyne. Ordered to be laid on the table.—Lord Henry Petty brought up the report of the Committee on the petition of the Sierra Leone Company, which was ordered to be laid upon the table and printed.—Mr. Hiley Addington moved, that the copy of the evidence taken before the Committee of last session, appointed to inquire into the petition of the cotton manufacturers be referred to the Committee to whom the petition of said manufacturers was presented this present session. Ordered.—The Duke of York's Surrey Estate Bill was read a third time and passed.

[PROPERTY TAX.]—Earl Temple said, that as he observed the Secretary at War in his place, he rose for the purpose of putting a question to him, on a subject which was highly interesting to a numerous and respectable body of men, and upon the answer which the Right Hon. Secretary made to him would depend, whether or not he

should give notice of bringing forward a motion before the House. The subject to which he referred was this:—He understood, that early in the month of January last, a communication was made to the commanders of several militia regiments by a person calling himself collector, requiring lists to be transmitted to him of all the officers in the several regiments, liable to pay the tax upon property for the amount of duty upon their pay. These lists were accordingly sent in, and, in consequence, certain sums were directed by the said collector to be stopped from the pay of the officers, being six months pay due upon the tax, from the 6th of April to the 10th of October, 1803. Now it must be obvious to the House, that such a demand could not be legally made, because one-third, at least, of these officers were not appointed till the time of the supplementary militia being called out, in July, 1803, and their commissions, upon which this tax was demanded, only existed about the end of June, or in the month of July last. There were instances of other officers who had been appointed since then, and yet the property tax was still demanded upon them from April last; and, when appeals were sent in, the answer given, as he understood, was, that these appeals would be taken into consideration, and, if well founded, that the tax appealed against should be deducted from the demand of duty upon the ensuing next month's pay. But this mode of proceeding, he considered, as imposing a great hardship upon these officers; for, upon supposition of the militia being disbanded in the interval, that money would be lost to them. And again, as to the manner of collecting this tax, instead of doing so quarterly, as he believed the act required, officers were called upon to pay six months duty. His lordship observed, that by the calculation which he had been induced to make, he found, that according to this plan, the deduction from the pay of ensigns would render the actual nett sum they would receive less, in fact, than that of day labourers in this city. He desired, therefore, to be informed, whether any alteration was to be made in this respect. The noble lord had, on behalf of the regiment which he had the honour to command, written to the Secretary at War on the subject, and had received for answer, that it was not that right hon. gentleman's intention to interfere in the arrangement. The noble lord wished, therefore, to know, whether it was in contemplation of his Majesty's ministers, to suspend the ar-

rangement, until a committee should be appointed to inquire into the business, as, otherwise, he should feel it is duty to submit a motion to the House on the subject.

The *Secretary at War* observed, that the noble lord had stated truly, that in the private answer he had returned to his lordship's enquiry upon this subject, he had explained, that being called upon to nominate the commissioners, whose business it was to tax the officers, his duty in this business was over. If the commissioners should be found to have exceeded their trust, the law was open to correct them; as far, however, as his information reached, he did not think any just ground of complaint could be laid against them. The tax, undoubtedly, could not commence till the officers' commissions were issued, and, at all events, complaints of this kind would be heard in the usual way of appeal, so that there could be no more reason for the interference of Parliament, with respect to the militia officers in particular, than with respect to the demand for the tax, as it affected the property of any other individuals. He concluded by disclaiming any idea of interference with the commissioners.

Earl Temple repeated, that the specific ground of complaint was, that those officers, who were not commissioned until July last, were made liable to pay the tax from the 6th of April; and when appeals were made, the collectors had said, that a deduction would be allowed upon the ensuing half-yearly assessment. Such was the hardship upon the officers of which he complained; and that in the mean time an illegal tax was, in fact, levied upon them.

The *Secretary at War* said, that he apprehended many officers had neglected to make their returns of income when first called upon; but undoubtedly those who had no commissions until June or July, were not to be charged with the income duty from the preceding April; and he was confident, that when the particulars of their several cases were taken into consideration, no illegality or species of oppression would be exercised against them.

Earl Temple then gave notice, that in consequence of the answer and explanation given by the Secretary at War not proving satisfactory to him, it was his intention within two or three days' time, to move the appointment of a committee to take into consideration the conduct of collectors of the income tax, as far as respected the demands made upon the officers of militia.

[**HIS MAJESTY'S INDISPOSITION.**]—Mr. *Secretary Yorke* rose and moved the order of the day for the second reading of the bill for amending and consolidating the various acts relative to volunteers. On the question being put from the chair,

Sir *Robert Lawley* rose and addressed the House as follows.—Sir; I rise to take upon myself a most delicate and distressing duty, by calling the attention of the House to a subject, which I consider to be one of the highest importance and the deepest interest to the country. The House will perceive, that I allude to the much lamented indisposition of our beloved Sovereign. Ever since the 14th of the present month, this House, in common with the public at large, have been in possession of the melancholy information, that his Majesty has been confined by a dangerous and doubtful illness. It is not my wish to enter, with any degree of minuteness, into this most delicate and distressing subject; but I cannot help thinking, after the interval which has taken place, and after the reports of the physicians specially appointed to declare to the public the state of his Majesty's health for the last two days, that Parliament has a right to expect some explicit communication. I cannot but consider such a communication necessary, in order to remove those distressing doubts which his Majesty's much deplored indisposition has created in every part of the country. Sir, I have a right to assume to myself, that that illness is of the most severe nature; and in the reports submitted to the public, no satisfactory ground of hope is held out that it will come to a speedy termination. Some direct, explicit communication is loudly called for, and this, as a member of Parliament, I think it my duty to require of ministers. Upon the answer which I shall receive to these few observations on this most interesting subject, I shall be guided, either in grounding upon it a specific motion, or in moving that this House do now adjourn.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer*.—Sir, in answer to the question which the honourable baronet has thought it his duty to put to his Majesty's ministers, I feel it incumbent upon me to say, that I have the happiness of being enabled to state to this House, that, in the opinion of his Majesty's confidential servants, founded upon the best information that can be obtained, such a communication as that required by the hon. baronet, could not possibly answer any good purpose; and farther, that any pro-

ceeding founded on such communication on the part of his Majesty's ministers, would, in their opinion, be inconsistent with the duty which they owe to the King, to Parliament, and to the country; highly indecent in itself under the present circumstances of his Majesty's indisposition, and, therefore, utterly unwarrantable.

Sir *Robert Lawley*.—Sir, I move, that this House do now adjourn.

Mr. *Fox*.—I feel, Sir, that the subject introduced to the attention of the House is one of the highest interest and the most sacred importance. It is very far from my wish, in the course of my observations, to fail in that delicacy which it so strongly suggests. But, Sir, I should feel that I was deficient in duty to this House, deficient in duty to his Majesty, deficient in duty to the principles of the constitution, if I could bring myself to acquiesce in the answer which the right hon. gent., who just sat down, has thought fit to submit to our consideration. It does not accord with my opinions, to attach so great a degree of delicacy to this discussion, as some persons may wish to inculcate. There does not appear any material obstacle in the way of fair, liberal discussion, and it is with such a view of the subject, that I am desirous of laying before the House, the reasons which induce me to think the answer of the right hon. gent. altogether unsatisfactory. It will not, I conceive, Sir, be denied, that hitherto the House and the Public, know nothing of the lamented indisposition of his Majesty, except through the medium of those daily Reports which have been published by official authority. By these alone can we be guided. On these alone can any opinion be formed. But, Sir, how has the right hon. gent. proceeded in attempting this evening to convey any thing like information to the House? He has told us, that it is the opinion of his Majesty's confidential servants that no communication is necessary—that such a communication would be indecent—that it could be made the ground of no subsequent proceeding. On this most extraordinary declaration I wish to call the attention of the House, not only to common practice, but to what is the strict letter and spirit of the constitution. I have to say, then, that I know of no such persons as the King's confidential servants. They are a body utterly unknown in any constitutional view of the subject. I know, indeed, of a body of individuals more particularly employed in the executive government, but in this capacity alone can they be recognized,

The right hon. gent. opposite is known to this House as the person holding the important situation of Chancellor of the Exchequer, and other gentlemen may be known as holding other offices in his Majesty's service, but as to confidential servants of his Majesty, the fact is, they cannot be recognized. In a general point of view, they are nothing more than privy councillors, and can claim no superior distinction. There is one, and only one point of distinction, and that is, the circumstance of their being more frequently called upon for their advice by the Sovereign. When any business of emergency occurs, and a council is to be held, they are more frequently called upon for their assistance, and that, Sir, is the only distinction betwixt them and the other members of his Majesty's privy council. It will not surely, however, be necessary to take up much of the time of the House, in shewing that this is a distinction inseparable from the regular daily exercise of all the royal functions. From the moment that the Sovereign, from illness or from any other cause, is rendered incapable of discharging the functions of royalty, those persons, described as confidential servants of the crown, are nothing more than ordinary privy councillors. The source of their distinction is, for the time, destroyed, and it is ridiculous to talk of their continuing the exercise of powers expressly delegated from the chief magistrate in person. If any communication had been made this evening from those styling themselves the confidential servants of his Majesty, I am sure, Sir, that such a communication would have been received with all the respect due to any message from so honourable a body of individuals, and any subsequent proceedings founded on such a communication must have been matter for very grave and important inquiry. But how does the House stand with respect to any communication at the present moment? Why, Sir, the whole is reduced to this simple point:—The right hon. gent. over the way, has informed us that certain individuals, styling themselves his Majesty's confidential servants, of whom the House constitutionally know nothing, have felt it their duty to give no information on a subject deeply interesting, not to the members of this House alone, but to every loyal man throughout the empire. They tell us farther, that any communication of this sort would be productive of no good consequence, but that to require any information at present would be equally improper and indecent. It is not surely, Sir, at all unreasonable to ask, whether this opinion is founded on any knowledge of

the present state of his Majesty's health, and the prospect of a speedy recovery? But here the right hon. gent. will not condescend to gratify the House with a single tittle of information. His answer is, that in the opinion of his Majesty's confidential servants, there is no occasion for any communication, and in this assurance Parliament is to confide. Now, how does the public information, respecting the Sovereign's health, stand? Has that information, which must be so gratifying to every loyal heart, been communicated, that the period of his Majesty's recovery may be expected to be near at hand? Have government communicated any thing at all like this to the House? Have they said a single word as to the probable duration of his Majesty's illness, and his ability to resume the ordinary functions of royalty? On these points they have left the House in a state of total darkness. If they had made any communication to the House, then it would have been for Parliament to determine whether a longer pause might not be allowed, without resorting to any extraordinary measures. On the other hand, if the communication had not been of so satisfactory a nature, the House, in the exercise of its constitutional privileges, would have been called upon to deliberate as to the steps proper to be adopted, and to decide whether those steps should be such as were applicable to a contingent event, or directed to an immediate evil. These, Sir, are my general views as to the imperious necessity of a communication on so very interesting a subject. After the communication had been made, it would then have remained with us to determine, what time was to elapse before it was made the ground of any subsequent proceedings, and before the nature of these proceedings is fully ascertained. If any argument were wanting to prove the expediency of an immediate communication to Parliament, in my opinion the official reports of his Majesty's health for the last two days would be fully sufficient to demonstrate it. It is very clear from these reports, that the speedy recovery of his Majesty is not to be reasonably expected. Yesterday the report was gratifying; so far as this, that an assurance of his Majesty's recovery from the illness with which he has been afflicted, was held forth, but it was, at the same time, accompanied with the declaration of the physicians, that a rapid amendment could not be expected. To-day the report was, that his Majesty was still better than he was yesterday, and that he was gradually approaching to recovery. There is, to be sure, Sir, in these reports, much to gratify every loyal

heart; but though we may now hope that his Majesty is out of danger, we have no ground for believing that he will speedily be enabled to resume the functions of royalty. In the one report we are told, that a rapid recovery cannot be expected; and, in the other, that he is gradually approaching to recovery. The terms are clearly contradistinguished to each other; and, if language has any meaning, the assertion I have now made is fully established. All loyal subjects are happy to have such good accounts of the health of their Sovereign; but as it is now declared that his recovery must be gradual, the question of the expediency of some communication on the subject to the House becomes more apparent. It is not at all my wish, on the present occasion, to anticipate what decision the House may come to after a communication is made; but I must protest against the doctrine, that certain persons, styling themselves his Majesty's confidential servants, should take on themselves the right of determining when a communication to Parliament should be brought forward. For any individuals, whatever situation under government they hold, whether appearing as Chancellor of the Exchequer, or as Secretaries of State, to assume to themselves the right of judging when an undoubted privilege of Parliament is to be exercised, is assuming a power which no former ministers have ever done in any period of our history. I have already said, Sir, that it is not my wish to anticipate any future discussion. I may, however, be permitted to allude to one fact, which is certainly of very considerable importance. As early, I believe, as the beginning of February, a circular letter was sent to the lord lieutenants of the several counties of the kingdom, announcing that a formidable and immediate attempt at invasion was expected by government. I believe, Sir, if such an opinion was entertained by government at that time, no circumstances have since reached them which can at all decrease their apprehensions of danger. Since the period alluded to, there have, on the contrary, been reports which still more strongly countenance the idea of an immediate attack of the enemy, and I believe it is now the opinion of many persons, that the enemy are only waiting the favourable moment to carry their threats into execution. Under such circumstances, I would call on ministers to consider, what would be the consequence of the suspension of the royal functions, if the enemy should, at such a crisis, succeed in landing on our shores? Before the volunteers could be called into action, it would be

necessary to subject them to martial law; but how is this to be effected, if there is no power in the state to issue the requisite proclamation. It is impossible for any gentleman to determine at what time the attempt of the enemy may be made. Even before we have left the place in which we are now assembled, intelligence of a landing may be received. Let me put it, Sir, to the right honourable gentleman, and to the House, in what situation the country would be placed, if, at the moment of invasion, the executive authority was totally suspended? If even under any circumstances invasion would be formidable, it is needless to expatiate on the increase of this danger under circumstances such as those now alluded to. But, Sir, there are other points of a constitutional nature, which loudly call for the adoption of some measure, to supply the place of the temporary suspension of the royal functions. These are not points of small import, but, on the contrary, highly worthy of consideration. As a supporter and admirer of the constitution, I am desirous of seeing all its branches properly balanced. Let me ask then, whether it is not consonant, as well to the letter, as to the spirit of the constitution, that the executive authority should keep up a due influence over the legislative power? It is the undoubted prerogative of the Sovereign to preserve a certain degree of control over the legislature, as it is of the legislature to watch over the proceedings of the executive part of the constitution. Of these powers of the Sovereign, there is none more clear than his right of proroguing or dissolving Parliament, even at five minutes notice. If this is a clear principle of the constitution, I should be glad to know how this control is to be exercised, and it ought to be constantly and actively employed, in the total absence of the exercise of the royal functions? The right honourable gentleman has informed the House, that his Majesty's confidential servants do not think any communication necessary. How far it may or may not be necessary, is not a point for them to decide. This decision is the exclusive right of Parliament. I am really utterly at a loss to know on what principle this extraordinary confidence is called for—on what ground it is that they require the House to make them the judges, when the real state of the health of the Sovereign is to be laid before the legislature.—By what claim are they to decide as to the time of making a communication so interesting to all orders of the community? There is no book, there is no practice, there is no principle, to justify the plea set up, of constituting the King's ministers, after the func-

tions of royalty have been suspended, the persons do determine what is most conducive to the public safety. Perhaps, Sir, I may hear a great deal of the responsibility which will attach to ministers. In no case could I consent to vest any set of men with extraordinary powers, from any promises of responsibility. But more especially in cases where the most important interests of the state are involved, I should be particularly jealous of conferring such powers. At a period when the very existence of the empire is at stake, it would be but a poor consolation to think that those who brought it to destruction were responsible for their errors and their crimes. When we see this reluctance on the part of ministers to communicate information we are inclined to inquire, when the period will come when such a communication will be produced. Already a fortnight has elapsed during which the functions of royalty have been confessedly suspended. Another fortnight may elapse, and the House may remain as uninformed on the subject of the indisposition of the Sovereign as at the present moment. In the first instance, no satisfactory information was afforded, and in the other case information might be withheld on equally solid grounds. What I require is, that the two Houses of Parliament should be apprised of the actual state of his Majesty's health, and thus be enabled to form an opinion of the steps necessary to be adopted for the public interest. At present no information has been given, and no grounds exist on which any grave deliberation can take place. It is impossible, Sir, to ascertain what is the limit to which the confidence required by ministers is to be carried. The system of blindfold, implicit confidence may go on from day to day. The executive power, at all times necessary, but more peculiarly requisite at a moment of the greatest national peril, may continue to be suspended. What adds to the danger arising from this system is, that the danger which menaces the country is one which is repeated from day to day. No gentleman can pretend to fix the period when the great crisis may arrive, but government ought to have the best information, as on them this responsibility must rest. But, whatever may be the conduct of ministers, let not this House be deficient in their duty. Let us shew that we are impressed with suitable views of the whole circumstances of the empire, and that nothing on our part shall be wanting to contribute to its general honour, independence, and safety.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer.—Sir, before I proceed to notice the other parts of

the speech of the hon. gent. who has just sat down, I beg leave to make a few observations on a subject which he appears to have viewed in a very important light. The subject I refer to, is the particular description employed in my first explanation to the hon. Baronet, who introduced the question, where I spoke of myself and my colleagues, as his Majesty's confidential servants. In making use of this expression, I merely employed a term long used, and perfectly well understood in this House. In using it, it was very far indeed from my wish, to hold out, in the most distant manner, the idea, that any confidential servant of his Majesty was at all freed from the gravest responsibility. I do not mean to dispute the position, that with this House must ultimately rest the determination, whether any steps may be supposed requisite to meet any extraordinary emergency arising from the suspension of the royal functions, or whether any measures beyond the common course of procedure may be adopted. The hon. gent., however, seems to insinuate, that there is, on the part of his Majesty's ministers, a desire to withhold communication when it is loudly called for by the circumstances of the country; on the contrary, Sir, I affirm positively, that there is, on our part no unworthy wish of concealing any degree of information which, consistently with our duty, could possibly be disclosed. We are anxious that nothing which ought to be known should be withheld, while we are desirous of being regulated by that delicacy, which on a subject of this nature, is on all hands, allowed to be so important. His Majesty's ministers, in the conduct which they have hitherto pursued have flattered themselves that they consulted the wishes and the feelings of the great majority of the House, as well as the public; and if they now abstain from any communication, it is from a sincere conviction, that it would be inexpedient, and, that instead of being subservient to any useful purpose, it might only furnish grounds for discussions, at all times to be reprobated: but more especially to be avoided in the present circumstances of the empire. We are sensible, Sir, that in following this line of conduct, we subject ourselves to a most perilous responsibility. We are aware, that in the performance of our duty to the Sovereign, we are not to overlook what we owe to the safety of the country, at a period of unexampled danger. It is not calling for too much credit to ask of the House to believe, that before our determination was formed, these considerations were maturely weighed, and that the result of these determinations has been made

liable to a responsibility greater than ever was experienced. We are not ignorant how far our obligation extends, and it is only after contemplating the subject in every possible light, that our resolution has been declared. I have to repeat then, as I said in the first instance, that any communication given under the present circumstances, could afford no national advantage, while it might give rise to material inconvenience. The hon. gent. who spoke last will surely not contend, that on every occasion, when, by temporary illness, the functions of the Sovereign are suspended, it would be either necessary or expedient to make a communication on the subject to Parliament. But this, Sir, is the amount of his argument, if carried to its utmost extent. The hon. gent. will not contend, that the interference of Parliament is indispensably necessary, except in cases of extraordinary emergency, and I must be allowed to say, that the present situation of his Majesty, is not one which falls under this general description. It has been argued, that the indisposition of his Majesty is not one likely to be of short duration, and in support of this, the official report of the physicians immediately appointed to attend the Royal person, is adduced. On this point, I beg leave to make a few remarks, founded not on light grounds, but the result of the most careful and anxious inquiry. After having collected every possible degree of information on the subject, I feel it my duty, Sir, to state, that the last reports of the physicians attending his Majesty, furnish no evidence against the speedy recovery of his Majesty. The fact is, that the report on which the hon. member has laid so much stress, was founded more on a wish to relieve that impatience which pervaded all ranks of the community, than on any opinion that the disorder with which his Majesty was afflicted was of a lingering description. The report, Sir, I have no hesitation in saying, was more in conformity to this general feeling, than to any ordinary appearances of his Majesty's indisposition. On the authority of those gentlemen by whom the bulletin is regularly signed, I feel myself entitled to say, that comparing the present state of his Majesty's indisposition with what it was on the two former occasions, there is every reason to believe, that the indisposition will be of short duration. A good deal has been said, Sir, of the consequences of the continuance of the suspension of the functions of royalty. No man can reflect on this subject without weighing well, what would be the effect of any determination which he might form. It is surely not presuming too far to put in a

claim on behalf of myself and my colleagues, that, before we came to the resolution which I stated in the commencement of the debate, we endeavoured to revolve the subject with the greatest anxiety and care. The resolution taken was one not hastily adopted, not stated to the House without the amplest consultation. It was brought forward under the firmest impression of its necessity, and the most grave conviction of the responsibility which it necessarily involved. There is one point to which the hon. gent. alluded, on which I wish to make one remark. He seemed to suppose, that if during the suspension of the royal functions, the landing of the enemy should be effected, no proclamation could be issued for calling out the volunteers and placing them under martial law. In this idea, the hon. gent. is certainly mistaken, for the royal signature, under the sign manual, is not necessary for such a proclamation. But even admitting that such a proclamation were necessary, the hon. gent. will not gain much in his argument. For I am happy to be able to state, that even in the event of an invasion the business of government would encounter no sort of obstruction. I cannot at present enter on the statement of particular facts to establish this position, but shall content myself with assuring the House, that if any extraordinary occasion should occur for the exercise of the Royal functions, there exists no obstruction for their exercise. Let me implore the House, therefore, not to listen to any proposition which can have the effect of embarrassing public business, or augmenting that anxiety necessarily arising out of the present circumstances of the country. His Majesty's servants in calling for this conduct on the part of the House, are far from wishing to shrink from that responsibility, which must necessarily attach to their present policy. They have endeavoured to combine and compare the different circumstances in the state of the empire. On the one hand, they have thought of their calls of duty to the Sovereign, without for a moment losing sight of the still more imperious duty of consulting the safety of the empire. It is not their wish to delay any communication, longer than necessity appears to require. They are anxious that premature information should not be pressed for, and they throw themselves on the candour of Parliament, subject to the gravest responsibility. To press such a communication at present, would, in my opinion, be unreasonable. To produce it under existing circumstances, appears to his Majesty's servants equally indecent and unwarrantable. They feel, that in withholding it they act in a manner which

their conscience approves, and they are convinced, that, had they acted otherwise, their conduct would have been universally condemned. It really, Sir, does appear to me extraordinary, that, whatever the opinion of gentlemen may be as to the necessity of a communication, they should endeavour to press the question of adjournment, at a crisis so full of interest, and so pregnant with danger. If a communication is considered as important, surely this is not the best mode of obtaining it. It will not be denied, that at such a moment as this, it would be highly inexpedient to interrupt the regular business of the legislature. If the country is in a state of danger, then it surely behoves Parliament to display more than common watchfulness and activity. So much, indeed, was I impressed with the imperious necessity of this House being assembled from day to day, that when I moved, on Friday last, that the adjournment should extend to Monday, I had almost prepared myself for some opposition. The motion of the hon. baronet does, therefore, greatly surprise me. It seems to have no sort of connexion with the question first submitted to the House, and I trust that on the present occasion it will not be entertained. I feel it important that the House should continue sitting; and how the hon. baronet, opposite to me, who is so desirous of a communication being made to the House, who calls so earnestly for information, can reconcile it with a motion for adjournment; I leave him to explain. I hope now, that the motion for the second reading of the volunteer bill, will be carried, there being no circumstances to justify any further delay of that measure.

Mr. Pitt.—Sir; I had not the good fortune to be in the House when the hon. baronet made his motion, and I am not quite sure that I now perfectly understand what the object of it is. I have, however, been informed, that the hon. baronet has made a motion for an adjournment, and that the ground he assigns for it is, that no regular communication has been made to the House upon a subject which so much interests the feelings of all classes of the community. I confess, that whatever opinion I may entertain upon the whole of that critical and anxious situation in which the country is now placed, and a more critical and anxious one never existed in the history of this country, I cannot think that the motion for an adjournment is one, which, in any possible view of the subject, can be either expedient or proper. I certainly do feel, that if, unfortunately, the moment should come, which I most earnestly hope will

never be the case, when Parliament shall be obliged to take cognizance of a suspension in the exercise of the royal functions, from that moment I think, on the constitutional ground stated by the hon. gent. opposite to me (Mr. Fox), that Parliament should be precluded from doing any act, except that of taking the necessary measures for supplying the deficiency in the executive branch of the constitution. This is an opinion I have always entertained, and this is the conduct which was adopted by Parliament on a former melancholy occasion; and although, at the period to which I allude, there was a very considerable difference of opinion as to the particular mode which ought to be adopted, yet I believe the general principle which had been laid down was universally approved of. But I certainly do not think, that a mere general apprehension and impression, however well founded they may appear to be, that the personal exercise of the royal authority has been suspended, would justify Parliament in suspending all its other functions, unless that fact was communicated to them in a way that would render it necessary for them to take notice of it. If, however, the regular reports of the physicians appointed to attend his Majesty, should induce gentlemen to think, that it is the duty of ministers, under all the circumstances of the case, to take immediate steps for making a communication to Parliament upon the subject, it is not only proper, but it is the duty of those members who entertain that opinion, to inquire of ministers why they have not made such communication to Parliament? I confess I feel that it is a most difficult and arduous responsibility for ministers to determine, how long the communication ought to be delayed, and at what moment it ought to be made. Whatever my opinion of ministers may be on other points, I am sure there is no man in his Majesty's councils, who does not feel that responsibility which, great as it must be at all times, and under any circumstance, is, in the present state of the country, increased tenfold. Looking, as I do for one, with the feelings I have always cherished, to the possibility of reaching the moment of the complete restoration of his Majesty's health, without the necessity of any interference on the part of Parliament, yet I certainly do feel, that, in the present critical situation of the country, we must count by days, and even by hours, in judging of the interval that ought to be allowed before the interference of Parliament becomes necessary. I must, there-

fore, say, that it would become ministers, well and maturely to consider the situation of the country, in deciding upon the line of conduct they ought to adopt. Ministers ought, and of course do know more of the state of affairs than other persons; they may be acquainted with circumstances, which may warrant them in thinking that a delay of a few days may be hazarded; but, every member in this House, every man in the country, knows that the country is threatened with a danger which may produce the most awful crisis it ever experienced. I, however, do not know to whom (unless upon a supposition of criminal negligence) except those persons who, in consequence of this calamitous event, are left in the situation of his Majesty's actual ministers; I do not, I say, know to whom, except to them, belongs, in the first instance, the responsibility of communication. It is, undoubtedly, a very nice and difficult point to decide, what the actual situation of ministers is, because they are left in a situation, for which the constitution has made no provision. Without at present entering into that discussion, I am clearly of opinion, that they being up to the moment of the supposed inability of his Majesty to exercise his royal functions, entrusted with the management of public affairs, it is not possible that they can be displaced from their situations, or absolved from the duties of their offices, until the fact is ascertained by Parliament. I will not take upon myself to say how long the communication may be delayed, or at what moment it ought to be made; but, undoubtedly, the danger and pressure of the moment may, even against men's wishes and feelings, create a sort of impatience upon this point, and make it a public duty to call for direct communication to Parliament. I do, therefore, hope, that ministers will not, both for the sake of the Sovereign and of the country, push any feelings of delicacy, and sentiments of reverence and affection, which they in common with every loyal man in the country, must feel; I hope, I say, they will not push those sentiments to the extent of endangering that, which has always been the dearest object of his Majesty's care, viz., the safety of those subjects whose happiness it has been the study of his life, to promote. Having said this God forbid that I should anticipate the melancholy moment of their being obliged, by the continuance of his Majesty's illness, to adopt any measure upon the subject; but at present, I am of opinion, that the responsibility of making the commu-

nication ought to be left where it is now placed; and, whatever may be my opinion of the conduct of ministers upon other points, I cannot believe that they will push, to a dangerous and criminal excess, that awful responsibility which belongs to them. In the mean time, there does not appear to me to exist any circumstance which calls upon us to suspend all our Parliamentary duties: until that communication to which I have before alluded be made to Parliament (and which I most fervently hope it will never be necessary to make) we are bound, by the duty which we owe to our country, especially in the arduous situation in which it is now placed, not to abandon our functions, or to neglect our duties; for if anything could aggravate the feelings of public affliction, or place the country in a state of real danger, it would be if any sudden alarm should occur in the interval when the exercise of the royal functions was suspended, and when Parliament had abandoned its duty, and abstained from proceeding with the necessary measures; because, by preparing for the royal assent, they might accelerate the effect of any legislative measure which it might be necessary to adopt to strengthen the country in the present crisis. I feel the measure which is appointed for discussion this day, viz., the volunteer bill, as coming under this description; not indeed, the measure itself, at least in its present shape, but the subject with which it is connected, because I think it may be made the means of giving us more substantial and effectual means of defence than those we now possess. I do not mean to say, that we have not now great and sufficient means of defence, but that they may still be more completely organised and consolidated. I am, therefore, most clearly of opinion, that whatever else it may become our duty to do, whether it may become necessary for us to institute a parliamentary inquiry or not, still that in the mean time we ought not to abandon our functions, but to proceed as far as possible with those measures, which are calculated to add to the defence and security of the country; by which means we shall avoid the mischief of unnecessary delay and diminish the evil which must exist, even from the interval of interruption of the royal functions, which has already taken place. If, then, there be any weight in these considerations, I hope we shall not now adjourn: indeed we ought not to adjourn, even upon the principles of the hon. baronet who made the motion; because, if further communication is necessary, most unquestionably the House ought to sit to put itself in a situ-

ation of hearing it. If any further interval is to elapse, before a communication takes place, still there is the same objection to the motion for adjournment; because, though I do not mean to throw out any insinuation against ministers, and though they have no temptation whatever to act wrong, yet it cannot for a moment be doubted, but, at such a moment, and under such circumstances, it is the duty of Parliament to continue sitting.—Under these circumstances I entertain a strong hope that the House will look dispassionately at the present state of public affairs, because it is one which ought to suspend every idea of party dissension; this is not a moment for any man, or set of men, to endeavour to obtain a triumph over their opponents. The crisis is much too serious and awful. The danger with which the country is threatened is great enough, without aggravating it by personal animosities or party dissensions. In mentioning the danger with which the country is threatened, I wish to be understood, that in my opinion, nothing can render that danger fatal but a spirit of animosity prevailing among men of weight and consideration in the country. Unanimity is now more than ever desirable. I mean as to great and essential measures, as to the ordinary business of Parliament, I see no reason why the House should not debate them now, as well as at any other period, and, therefore, it is, that I am desirous that we should now, enter upon the business appointed for discussion this day.

Mr. *Windham*, I rise, Sir, to submit a few observations to the House, in consequence of what has fallen from different gentlemen in the course of this most interesting discussion. My right honourable friend who has just sat down, has argued this question, as if the adjournment proposed by the motion, was meant to take place for some time, and to suspend the functions of Parliament; but, assuredly, that is not the intention of the honourable baronet who made the motion; if it was, I certainly could not give it my support. The motion merely means, as I understand it, an adjournment for this day.—Before, Sir, I proceed any further, I beg to return my thanks to the honourable baronet, who brought forward the present question. In making the motion which he has submitted to the House, he has performed a duty incumbent on every member of the House, but one which I am sorry to say, many of us would not have possessed sufficient fortitude to perform. For my own part, I am free to declare, that I should have left the

House sorrowful and dejected, if the subject which the honourable baronet has brought under discussion had escaped animadversion. In answer to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I have to observe, that I have often, in the course of my parliamentary life, heard discussions about confidence, and have myself often argued upon the necessity of reposing a reasonable degree of confidence in ministers, but never did I hear it argued for, to the extent that it has been argued for this night by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The whole substance of his argument amounted to this: "Here we are, his Majesty's confidential servants; we are in full possession of circumstances, but we will make no communication, however urgent the crisis may be and we claim responsibility. We call upon you, the Parliament of England, to trust blindfolded to us, without any other security than our own responsibility." Now, without meaning, Sir, anything disrespectful or harsh to his Majesty's ministers, this is a confidence which, in my opinion, ought not to be reposed in any ministers. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has asked: "Upon every temporary illness to which his Majesty may be subject, will you go to the length of maintaining that it is necessary to apply for the interference of Parliament?" If I were bound to answer that question in strict conformity to the principle of the constitution, my answer would be, "yes." But it is very well known that general theories always admit of some mitigation, and, in certain cases, Parliament may connive at a short neglect of its duties, but upon such a point there must exist some limitation; but how is Parliament to ascertain what is the proper point of limitation, if, as in the present instance, they are deprived of all regular information? All the satisfaction that Parliament can obtain from his Majesty's ministers is this: "We know our duty, we act upon our responsibility, and therefore you, the Commons of England, must wait till we tell you that it is right and fit you should interfere." Against a doctrine so outrageous, so dangerous, and so unconstitutional, I do most solemnly protest. There never was, I will maintain, a doctrine so outrageous of all principle, and so pregnant with the most serious mischiefs.—It is one that has never before been advanced; that whenever the Sovereign ceases, from whatever cause, to have his regular control, the confidential servants of the crown are to carry on the government as long as they please, or until circumstances require an actual exercise of the royal authority. If you once admit the principle, it is impossible to say how long the country may be kept

without an executive government. We have seen that ministers have, for a fortnight, suffered the functions of royalty to be suspended, and even now they think no communication necessary. How are we to know how long this system is to be continued? I really see no reason why, upon the principle now laid down, it may not be kept so for six months. My right honourable friend (Mr. Pitt) does not, indeed, go to the same length as the Chancellor of the Exchequer: he has displayed his usual judgment upon this question; but still I cannot concur with him in opinion, that the moment (though he admits it to be near) is not yet come in which the interference of Parliament is necessary. This is the real question before the House. Is the period arrived, or is it not, when Parliament can no longer trust to his Majesty's confidential servants? Let us consider in what manner and by what circumstances the present moment is distinguished from those which have preceded it? And whether, if we do not interfere now, there is anything to make us interfere afterwards, except the lapse of time, which, as my right hon. Friend has said, we must count upon this most interesting subject by days and by hours.—There are, let me remind the House two moments to be kept in view, the moment of inquiry and the moment of proceeding. This question has been argued, as if the consequence of a communication to Parliament must be the immediate adoption of some measure to supply the deficiency of the executive government. But this is not the case. We do not call for any parliamentary proceeding, but for an inquiry: and upon the result of that inquiry it would depend, whether any further proceeding were necessary or not.—Now Sir, the reports respecting the state of his Majesty's health are those only on which we can place any reliance; yet, what is very extraordinary, the Chancellor of the Exchequer tells us, we are not to be guided by these reports. He not only says, you are to rely on me in preference, nay in opposition to the physicians, but he goes still farther, and tells you what the physicians mean to say. He is determined not only to declare against their opinions, but he is resolved, that they shall not be permitted to put their own meaning on their own words. The physicians say, that his Majesty's recovery can only be gradual; but the fact, says the hon. gentleman, is not so. "The physicians did, to be sure, put such language into the report; but it was not thus that their meaning is to be understood. They only used this language to quiet the popular anxiety, and to put an end to ru-

mours out of doors; but I can give you certain information, that the report of the physicians is quite short of the truth, and that his Majesty is, at this moment, fully adequate to the functions of Royalty." Surely, Sir, this is to take a most unwarrantable liberty, both with the characters of the physicians who are described to have acted thus, and with the duties and dignity of the House to whom such a representation is addressed. To ascertain what these duties are, let us see what is the fact. It is now about fourteen days, since the House and the country received the alarming and afflicting notification, of the King's indisposition. The very notification proved that the illness could not be of a very slight or transient nature; and, undoubtedly, the general opinion was, that the illness, whatever was its kind, was in degree such as prevented for the time, the exercise of the Royal functions. The House decidedly acted upon this persuasion, having by a sort of general agreement, - than which nothing could be more proper nor more decorous, and in which the ministers had their full share, suspended all business that was not of a mere private or formal nature. What information has the House received upon the subject since that time?—the report of yesterday which precludes the hope of a rapid amendment. The facts thus stated, constitute the true description of the situation of the country. We know, by authority, that his Majesty is ill: we believe his illness to extend to the degree that I have described; and we are now told that a rapid recovery from this illness is not to be expected. The country is, therefore, in a most alarming state, and upon the principle now laid down it may continue in that state for any indefinite time longer. The House, in cases of this sort, may, for a while, dissemble its feelings; it may, for a while, turn away from its situation, and shut its ears to the call of duty; but can we go on in this way, when the knowledge of our situation is forced upon us, when we can no longer disguise to ourselves the facts, or deny the duty which those facts necessarily give rise to? I certainly hope that the physicians may turn out to be mistaken in their opinion; it is very possible that it may be so; but still that opinion is the only authority the House can act upon. I do not know, nor could the physicians themselves say with precision, what period they had in view, when they said a rapid recovery was not to be expected; but they certainly meant to acquaint the public that they were not to flatter themselves with the hope that his Majesty's restoration to

health could be immediate. Can Parliament, with this knowledge before them, go on proceeding upon business as if nothing had happened? Can we, with propriety, go on at all? At all events, it appears to me that all business ought to be suspended, but that which is immediately necessary. With regard to the bill now before the house, no man can say that it is immediately necessary, though I agree with my right hon. friend, that the discussions connected with it are of the utmost importance. With the opinions I entertain upon this subject, I certainly do not wish to have the discussion unnecessarily postponed, but it is singular, that ministers should now be so anxious to press forward the discussion, after they have postponed all public business for a fortnight. It is rather singular to observe the time at which they now call upon the House to proceed upon business; it is exactly the day after the physicians have declared, that they did not entertain hopes of a rapid amendment in his Majesty's health. I again beg to repeat the question, at what period do ministers think that the House ought to interfere, or is it meant that Parliament should go on blind-folded, until those who have been chosen his Majesty's confidential ministers think fit to make a communication? I cannot reconcile this to any principle of the constitution, to the practice of Parliament, to any regard for the interests and safety of the Monarchy, or to any well-founded consideration of the interests and feelings of the Sovereign himself.—In what fell from the Chancellor of the Exchequer a little word "indecent" slipped in, upon which I cannot avoid making a few observations. That right hon. gentleman has spoken of the indecency of these discussions. I beg leave to say, that I have as just a sense and as deep a feeling of what is due to his Majesty's personal character and feelings as the honourable gentleman or any of his Majesty's ministers. In constitutional attachment to the Sovereign all loyal men must be presumed to be equal. It is saying little, therefore, to say, that, in that respect, I shall not allow myself to be outdone by the honourable gentleman; but I shall as little allow myself to be outdone by the honourable gentleman, or any one else in that further sense of personal respect and attachment which may be felt by those who may have enjoyed, more or less, the honour of being admitted to his presence, who may have witnessed more nearly his private virtues and his domestic happiness, and have received in various degrees marks of his royal condescension and favour. On no one of these grounds will I yield to any of his Majesty's

confidential servants, nor allow that such feelings are in the smallest degree, called in question, by anything that has been said by me or others on the present occasion. On the contrary, I do think it highly indecent in ministers to insinuate, that any measure proposed to be adopted for the benefit of the state, for the safety of the monarchy, and consequently for the service of his Majesty, is, or can be, in contradiction with the royal feelings. There is no ground for any remark of this sort. If Parliament did not, in the circumstances in which we are placed, call for further information, after so long a period has elapsed, after the information it has received from the physicians, it would, in my opinion, abandon its duty and disgrace its character, and I should have retired this night from the House with a mind dejected and sorrowful, if no member had made this inquiry, and if this discussion had not taken place.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer.—Sir; there are two points to which I must beg the attention of the House. I rise for the purpose of denying that I ever broached the doctrine which the hon. gent. who spoke last has attributed to me. I said that the argument of the hon. gent. opposite to me (Mr. Fox) seemed to imply, that there ought to be always an interference in that House whenever there was any supposed interruption in the personal exercise of the royal authority, but I never stated, that, if there was any delay on the part of his Majesty's ministers, the House was at all fettered in its discretion, or that the House might not, without any communication on their part, institute any proceeding which the House thought fit. The hon. gent. has also stated that I have set up my own opinion in opposition to his Majesty's physicians. All I can say on this part of the accusation against me is, that I have stated nothing as matter of speculation or opinion of my own, but upon the authority of the physicians. I wish to be distinctly understood here to restate, that there is not, at this time, any necessary suspension of such royal functions as it may be necessary for his Majesty to discharge at the present moment.

Mr. Canning.—Sir; I feel, in common with my right hon. friend over the way, that the hon. baronet who provoked this discussion is deserving of the thanks of the House and of the country, and I am sure he will have them for the motion he has made. Whatever difference there may be as to the mode, there is every reason to be satisfied with what has been done. The effect of the motion has been to procure much informa-

tion, which would not have been given if the hon. baronet had not required it. If I understood the right hon. gent. (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) right, he stated that if any emergency should arise, there is no physical cause why the royal functions should not be exercised by his Majesty even now. This is a more consoling, and satisfactory communication, than any one now present could have set out with the hope of receiving when he came down to this House. Whether it be well founded or not, rests entirely on the responsibility of his Majesty's ministers, and I do hope, that as the attention of Parliament has been called to this most important point, and warning has been given to ministers, that a strict watch is kept over them, the House will not be put back much beyond the proper time, as to any communication which it may be necessary to make. The only question now before the House is, whether, in contemplation of a more speedy termination of the calamity that has befallen his Majesty, than any one in the House expected this night, the House will put itself forward to meet his Majesty on the resumption of his royal functions, with those important measures which are most necessary to the safety of the country, or by adjourning this night, leave the question which the hon. baronet has put, to be repeated to-morrow, without any greater chance of a satisfactory explanation. It does seem to me, that pressing the question to a division, may be attended with bad consequences. I am sure such consequences are extremely remote from what the hon. baronet had in contemplation in putting the question. The only practical difference in meeting to-morrow, if the question should be pressed to a division, will be, that the House will meet to-morrow with the bill appointed to be read a second time this night, one stage backward; but if, on the division, the present motion should be rejected, it will be a precedent for future unnecessary delay. I again return my thanks to the hon. baronet, for the information he has procured, and I hope that ministers will now feel, that the eyes of the country are more anxiously turned towards them, particularly since the explanations which have taken place this night. In expressing, therefore, my warmest thanks to the hon. baronet who has brought forward this motion, I entreat and implore of him, not to press it to a division, that the ministers may feel the weight of the responsibility which they have thought proper to take upon themselves. If it should be pushed to a division, I fear I shall, for

the reasons I have stated, be under the necessity of voting against the adjournment; but if such a vote, if I should be put to the necessity of giving it, be construed into the slightest or most remote shadow of confidence in the present government, I shall be most egregiously misunderstood. Having stated these grounds for my request, I do earnestly entreat the hon. baronet to spare me the pain which I should feel, if I thought there was the most remote possibility of such a construction being put upon my conduct.

Mr. Grey.—Sir; after what has been said by my hon. friend near me (Mr. Fox), and the right hon. gent. on the bench below (Mr. Windham), I should not have risen for any other purpose than to obtain an explanation of an ambiguous expression which has fallen from the right hon. gent. opposite (the Chancellor of the Exchequer); an expression which would have a dangerous tendency if the ambiguity were not explained. I have felt, I am sure, in common with every one present, the highest satisfaction at the improved state of health in which the House is given to understand that his Majesty is in; but this satisfaction has, nevertheless, been damped by doubt and suspense. When it was stated that there was not any necessary suspension of the royal authority, as to such functions as it may be incumbent on his Majesty to discharge, the statement was qualified, as to such functions as extraordinary circumstances may render necessary. I wish the report had been more large, and less liable to be divided by distinctions: for I cannot conceive a royal authority competent to some things and not competent to others. If the royal authority is, in fact, competent to some duties, but not to all, dreadful, indeed, as the right hon. gent. under the gallery (Mr. Pitt) has described it, is the responsibility which those who state themselves to be his Majesty's confidential ministers have assumed. If they think the royal authority in the present state of his Majesty's health, competent to some things, and incompetent to others, they, in fact, take everything upon themselves. On this ground it is, that I wish for explanation, for without explanation the assurance that has been given is incomplete. It would have been more satisfactory if his Majesty's ministers had been enabled to state, as a ground of the assurance they have given, that his Majesty communicated with them in the usual way, and if they had not given it as an interpretation of the report of the physicians, when the words of that report appear so remote from any such interpretation. On this ground it is, that I

wish not to enter into any minute discussion but to have an explanation of a circumstance which I think most essential.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer.—Sir; I was in hopes that the observations which have fallen from the hon. gent. would have been prevented by what I stated. I meant distinctly to state, that there is not at this time any necessary suspension of the royal authority for any act which may be necessary to be done.

Sir R. Lawley.—I rise, Sir, to assure the House, that it was not from any motive of impatience that I made this motion. It was because I thought Parliament was placed in the most unconstitutional situation. In the mind of every person present, the circumstances, urgent and pressing as they were, of the critical situation in which the country stood, were enhanced by any suspension of the royal authority; it was on this ground that I introduced the present discussion. I thought the House ought to establish some mode, by which the discretion of ministers should be bounded in matters of such essential moment. It is materially necessary that they should not be left at large, with no other limit than what they choose to impose on themselves. I do not desire to enter further into the discussion at present; I am ready to withdraw my motion if it be the sense of the House that I ought to withdraw it; but at the same time I think Parliament will not discharge the duty which it owes to the country, and which the country expects, if, after fifteen days of dangerous illness, it does not obtain a more complete explanation of the actual state of his Majesty's health.—Here the Speaker put the question for withdrawing the motion.

Mr. Grenville.—Sir; I should be reluctant in such a moment to trespass upon the House, if it did not seem to me absolutely necessary to press more materially for the information which the question put by the hon. baronet has drawn forth from the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The information that has been given, so far from relieving my mind, has excited sensations, which even my desire to comply with the wish of the House, in allowing the motion to be withdrawn, will not allow me to pass unnoticed. The distinct words the Chancellor of the Exchequer made use of were these, "There is not at present any necessary suspension of the royal functions for any act which may be necessary to be done."—Now, does this mean any thing else than that the Chancellor of the Exchequer thinks it competent for him to decide what the royal authority was to be ap-

plied to? Am I right? If I am not, I will spare the House the trouble of hearing me to any further extent.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer.—Sir: I should have thought, that the answer which I gave to the hon. member on the opposite bench (Sir R. Lawley, would have precluded the necessity of the observations of the hon. gent. who has just sat down.

Mr. Grenville.—I do not know Sir, whether any other member is in the same situation with myself; but I protest that every thing I hear in the nature of explanation, so far from elucidating, serves only to cloud what the House is so desirous to be distinctly informed of; and it appears to me from the whole of these explanations as they are called, that there is a constant design and endeavour to divert the attention of the House from the conduct of ministers on the subject, and the attempt to divert it is made only because it will not bear discussion. I own I agree in the opinion of my right hon. friend near me (Mr. Windham), that the theory of the constitution requires that, whenever the royal authority is suspended, at that moment Parliament should be informed of the suspension, not for the purpose of immediately proceeding to form new arrangements to supply the suspension, but for the purpose of deciding whether or not it ought to proceed, and whether it is not for the safety of the country that some new step should be taken. I can easily conceive many cases in which, on such information, the discretion of Parliament would adjourn the consideration of the propriety of adopting any new step; but Parliament being informed of the circumstances, should hold in its own hands the power of deciding and not suffer it to continue in the hands of those who having been appointed and confidential servants of the crown, when the royal functions were in full exercise, continue to hold their functions after the suspension, till Parliament decides on the propriety of some new arrangement. I think it the more necessary to make this distinction, as those with whom I have conversed on the subject, look upon a communication, when properly made, as necessarily to be followed up with immediate proceedings for a new arrangement. When I speak of a communication properly made, I do not conceive that those who have been appointed the servants of the crown, when the royal authority was in its full exercise, are the proper channel for such a communication. The proper mode is, in my opi-

nion, that the facts should be authenticated before the privy council, because that mode affords greater security; not that I mean to impute to any one the design of imposing on Parliament, or of exposing himself to the danger of Parliamentary vengeance, by an improper communication. When I dwell upon the difference of a communication by his Majesty's confidential servants, and a communication by the privy council, I am aware that I expose myself to the answer, that the confidential servants will say, there may be a difference of opinion in the privy council from want of information. I know of no such difference; the only real information on such points can arise from nothing but the examination of the medical persons in attendance; so that, in this respect, the confidential servants and the privy council stand on the same grounds. Will not Parliament prefer hearing the evidence of the medical gentlemen at its own bar. This is the practice of the House in the case of Election Committees; a medical gentleman attends at the bar, to determine by the judgment of the House on his examination, whether there is such an interruption to his health as to prevent his resuming his functions in the Committee, and the Committee adjourns all business for a day to give room for this determination. I am aware that this is but a light and trivial subject, compared with one of such vast moment as that now under consideration; but if it is right that the practice should be instituted and adhered to, even in trivial things, I cannot conceive it right to abandon it in matters of the greatest moment. Upon the whole, I cannot help giving it as my opinion, that this question ought not to be a question of confidence. It is the duty of Parliament to have information of the state of his Majesty's health from the best authority, instead of having it from those who style themselves his Majesty's confidential servants, and who gave the information in different words from the best authority. The proper course has not been adopted. If proper information had been given, there is no doubt that every person in the House would have proceeded with the highest degree of temper and moderation; and would not the people be better satisfied, when the Parliament was informed of what it was entitled and bound to know, and when it was attentive to the duty which it was to exercise upon that information?—The question was now put on the motion for adjournment, and negatived without a division. The question was then put on the

original motion for the second reading of the Volunteer Consolidation Bill.

[VOLUNTEER CONSOLIDATION BILL.]

—Mr. Grenville said, that his Majesty's ministers having determined to give the House the liberty of resuming the debate, which they themselves had thought proper so long to suspend, it became his duty to offer such remarks as occurred to him on the proposed second reading. When the bill had been introduced by the Secretary of State, a good deal was said of the hopes which were entertained of temper and impartiality in the discussion, and as a motive of inducement to that temper and impartiality, the importance of the measure was dwelt upon, and an appeal was made to the feelings of the House, as to the duty of being impartial on a measure, which the right hon. Secretary represented as so essential to the country. That appeal had obtained due attention from all those to whom it was directed. It was impossible, indeed, to look to the situation of the country, without being penetrated with the necessity of discussing with temper, every great measure proposed for its defence. If it were not for that situation, it would not now be necessary for him to take up the time of the House. The danger of invasion was such, as it was not necessary for him to dwell upon. If the country was on the day of invasion, to calculate every thing that had been done for its preservation, he was at a loss to conceive, how the present ministers could be justified. Had every step that had been taken been applied in the best manner to secure the country? However happy the man would be who could persuade himself of the affirmative, he could not envy his feelings, if they be founded on the passing of the bill now before the House. In advertent to the papers he had moved for, relative to what was called the volunteer system, he should briefly notice the points which seemed to him most worthy of attention. Much difference of opinion prevailed on the employment of the volunteers. He was one of those who were not against the volunteers in one sense, nor for them in another. He was therefore sorry for these two general distinctions. He was for the volunteers, because he thought the true and genuine British spirit called forth by pressing danger, a necessary ingredient in the force and defence of the country. He would say more, that such an array of that spirit may be made, as with the aid of a proportionate regular army, would make this country impregna-

le to any force that could be sent to attack it. In that sense, he was for the volunteers. If, on the other hand, he was told that it was impossible to look forward to any great increase of the regular army, as had been said by the Secretary of State, in opening this business, and that thence it was inferred, that the volunteer force should be made as nearly as possible a regular force, he conceived the object unattainable, and he thought the attempt to attain it could have no other effect than to exhaust the volunteer spirit; and to husband this spirit, which was the spirit of the country, was as necessary as to husband its finances. If he were to enter into the grounds of these opinions, his difficulty would be, how to ground upon the present bill any large or general view of the volunteer force. The Secretary of State, in introducing the bill, told the House, that two things were to be done by it; first, that the exemptions were to be assimilated, viz.: those from the Militia and those from the Army of Reserve; secondly, to re-enact what was and is already law, and therefore unnecessary to be re-enacted, unless it were for the purpose of adding the condition of another resignation, the right of resigning. A bill confined to these two objects, would not admit of any large or comprehensive view of what was called the volunteer system, of such a view as it was the duty of the House to entertain, and till it was entertained the House would not have done its duty. He should content himself at present, with a few remarks on what had obtained the title of the volunteer system; and he should appeal to the candour of every member of the House, and that of the country, whether, when ministers had given the assurance, that during the recess, they would devote their utmost attention to the perfection of the volunteer system; he would appeal, and ask, whether it was possible, that a measure requiring so much labour and attention, could be perfected by the present bill? No five persons were of the same opinion on this, which was called a system, as those who were called upon to execute it well knew. For the purpose of understanding what was called the volunteer system, he had taken the liberty of moving for copies of the letters addressed to the lords lieutenant. Even in the contracted view of the system which the bill imposed upon the House, the contradictions which appeared from the papers on the table, could not fail to make an impression. This afforded grounds for the re-

marks which he was about to offer, and which he found it difficult to arrange. He should first observe on the letter of Lord Hobart of the 20th of June, withholding the exemptions from the ballots. It was easy to conceive the natural course to be observed in calling forth British spirit. But in the course followed by his Majesty's ministers, fear, hope, and appeals to the generosity of the people followed each other in the most extraordinary succession, without co-operating to any one possible result. Lord Hobart's first letter supposed that there was to be no exemption from ballot, except for certain descriptions of volunteers. From that it was supposed that there was some principle that was acted upon. In the part of the country he lived in, and he was sure the same disinterestedness prevailed in other parts, there was no expectation of any exemptions; at least, the men were ready to come forward without any. Consequently, the effect of granting the exemptions, was, without procuring any real advantage with respect to the volunteer forces, to cripple the Militia and the Army of Reserve. When government had, in the first place, procured as many volunteers as they could obtain, they suddenly put a stop to the acceptance of offers, when they found that the exemptions, unnecessarily given, left no men for the ballot.—The next point in the papers was the indemnification for property taken by the enemy or lost. In that paper there was a paragraph well worthy of attention. In order to animate the inhabitants where the descent should be made, it was said, that it must, at the same time, be understood, that no indemnification was to be made for the property of such persons as were of age to aid the public service, and whose names were not on the roll, either as drivers, pioneers, guides, &c.—Another point extremely interesting, that of the election of officers, had undergone a very useful discussion on the day on which the bill was introduced. The view was, whether the right existed; another, whether if it did exist, it was prudent to continue it. The Secretary of State had clearly explained, that the right was at first exercised, but that he would have thought it his duty, if it were afterwards insisted upon, to advise his Majesty to refuse the services of the corps so insisting. The noble lord (Castlereagh) who followed the Right hon. Secretary, on that occasion, with some little difference, maintained the same principle. But, in opposition to this, there were the public orders for the regulation of the pioneer corps, in which

it was established, that no corps should consist of less than 25, nor more than 75, that they should recommend their own leaders; and, when the corps amounted to 50, they were to have a captain in addition to the leader. The next point was, the inconsistency of government in increasing the volunteer force, by the acceptance of offers in every possible case. In the first instance, the volunteer force was to be increased by all possible means, where it had not reached a certain extent; a few lines below, it was mentioned by way of encouragement, that 25 firelocks were deemed sufficient for drilling 100 men. No explanation had yet been given of the omission of ministers to provide arms. If we had been taken by surprise, there would have been some excuse; but his Majesty's ministers had seen all along the continued offences of the French government, and they had themselves commenced the war in consequence. Under these circumstances there was no excuse for not having the arsenals properly supplied. It could not have been regarded as a symptom of hostility by the French government to have the arsenals thus supplied.—The object of his Majesty's ministers, with respect to the volunteer force, should have been to increase it as much as possible, without interfering with the ballots: not thinking of the probability of this interference in the outset, they found themselves embarrassed by it when they were not aware.—The right hon. gent. then proceeded to observe upon the circular letter of the 28th Sept. to the lord lieutenants of the counties, respecting the exemptions; wherein it is expressly stated, that if any member of the corps shall neglect to attend at the proper times and places of muster, and exercise, then such members shall not be entitled to the exemptions allowed by the act, and to which members regularly attending, are justly entitled. By this letter it was manifest, that the system upon which ministers built so much faith, was full of incongruities and inconsistencies, or it could not have been necessary for the rt. hon. Sec. to resort to that mode of explaining the meaning of the intention of the legislature.—He then referred to the opinion given by the Attorney-general upon the subject of fines, which opinion was directly the reverse of that which the expounders of the law had delivered into the court of King's Bench, and which latter opinion, to the understanding and common sense of every person, must appear perfectly just. It served to shew the incapacity of ministers, and also the error into which the learned gent. had fallen,

when boldly giving his exposition of their wise acts.—He then alluded to the erection of beacons in the different maritime counties, and observed, that even in that respect, ministers had shewn similar incapacity. In one county in particular, not less than four different orders were given; first, to erect the beacon; well, that was very proper to be done, but then came the question—"who is to pay for the erection?" a reference in that respect was given to the county, they refused, and the persons employed were then directed to apply to the general of the district, who was not apprized of the manner in which the correspondence was to be maintained; so negligent had government been of the ordinary language in which these communications were to be carried on! Then came a question, in what manner the beacon was to be erected? To this no answer had been given.—The next point, which he considered as one of very material importance, and to which some allusion had been made on the introduction of the bill, respected the days of exercise, which he understood to be 85. The letter of the 14th of Jan. 1804, stated that adjutants, serjeant majors, &c. were to be employed in training the men, for which service they were to be remunerated with permanent pay, and the pay to be guaranteed to them, as the right hon. Secretary's letter expressly states, by his Majesty's confidential servants, thereby making themselves the sole executive power of the country.—The right hon. gent. then adverted to the letter of the 1st of Feb. describing the apprehensions of government respecting an immediate attack from the enemy, and containing the opinion of his Majesty's law advisers. From the general contents of that letter, he inferred that when once a volunteer had disclaimed the exemptions to which he might be entitled, he could not at any subsequent period claim them; thereby conveying to the mass of the volunteers, that in case they disobeyed the opinions and wishes of government, even though under the sanction of the law, as settled by the court of King's Bench, then the services of such corps might be discontinued at the option of his Majesty's ministers. Having at some length critically and minutely examined the different bearings of the acts, and the letters as connected with these acts, and pointed out what he considered as the deficiencies and defects, the right hon. gent. concluded with recommending the subject to the serious attention of the House, and expressing an intention of moving for a committee to enquire into the whole of the volunteer system.

Lord Ossulston spoke at some length upon

the subject, but in so low a tone of voice, that he was perfectly inaudible. From what we could indistinctly collect, he seemed to approve of the system in general.

Mr. *Secretary Yorke* complimented the noble lord upon the acquisition which the House would obtain from his talents. He perfectly agreed with the right hon. gent. (Mr. Grenville), that the introduction of the bill would afford an opportunity to discuss the great question of the volunteer system in all its branches, and which discussion no one would be more anxious to meet than himself. Though he agreed in this particular, he must express his difference of opinion with the right hon. gent. as to the application of his speech to the bill now before the House. He had paid great attention to that speech, and could not distinguish any one part which he could adapt to the bill, until he came towards the conclusion. He, therefore, should not follow the right hon. gent. through the windings and turnings which he had taken to arrive at the point, but proceed to that point immediately; and he must take occasion to lament that the House had been so often troubled upon the occasion. The greater part of the right hon. gentleman's speech, was composed of hypercriticisms upon a variety of circular letters, which did not apply in the least to the present bill. He would merely state the outline of it to call gentlemen's attention back, and then he trusted it would be suffered to go to a committee, where every one would have an opportunity of delivering his opinion, and strike out any thing which might eventually contribute to the general perfecting of the measure. The right hon. gent. had been arguing, as if he conceived the bill was introduced as one completely perfect, and adapted to answer every purpose for which it was intended. It certainly was not so introduced. It was impossible on a subject of such great and serious moment that it could be rendered perfect all at once. He had never considered it so. Time, experience, and attention were the best ingredients to make it perfect. The right hon. gent. had stated, that before the recess, ministers had promised to re-consider the subject fully. Undoubtedly, such a promise was made, and had been acted upon, but then it did not of necessity imply a direct and positive pledge to bring a measure forward, which, in its formation, should be perfectly new. Every attention had been given on his part, and the more he considered, the more he was convinced, that the less he attempted to do towards making the measure perfect the better, as it could

only be perfected from the united efforts of the whole House. The right hon. gent. in his view of the subject, seemed to take two leading features, namely, with respect to the exemptions and the right of resignation; to the latter, some very material doubts were entertained. These doubts it was the chief object of the present bill to do away; and also by a consolidation of the other existing laws relative to the volunteers, to clear up any misapprehension upon the subject, and get rid of those verbal incongruities of which he now so strenuously complained. With respect to the papers to which he had alluded being "the system of the volunteers," he could assure the right hon. gent. that no such title had been given by government. The only passage in the right hon. gentleman's speech which referred to the bill, was that in which he stated, that he conceived the better plan to be adopted would be to postpone the further consideration of the measure, in order to give an opportunity for forming a committee of inquiry, to examine into the system in general, and thereon might be founded a new bill, preferable, in every respect, to the present one, and calculated to provide for the defence and security of the kingdom.—This, however, in his opinion, would be an unnecessary postponement, because, if the present system is radically bad, then it must operate as a good reason with gentlemen to propose another, which might be done without the trouble of forming a committee. Understanding, however, the right hon. gent. to be friendly to the system in general, he should not advert to the arguments which had formerly been used, but merely confine his observations to the institution of the system, and he must take occasion to observe, that he had never said the regular army could not be augmented; on the contrary, he thought it might admit of considerable augmentation; all that he meant to assert, when speaking on the subject formerly, was, that the present time was not favourable for such an augmentation, when the relative situation of France and the rest of Europe was considered. The militia of Great Britain at present consisted of 90,000 men, that of Ireland of 18,000 only, last war 28,000. No augmentation in the militia could take place, considering the disposition of what is termed the regular forces. His Majesty's government, therefore, was of opinion, that in order to complete the defence of the kingdom, a compulsory or voluntary system should be resorted to. The latter was resorted to, and it would be in the recollection of every gent., that at the time

it was first resorted to, no proposition met with such general support. The House approved of it, and awarded its thanks to the volunteers, both at the end of the last war, and previous to the late recess, on the motion of an hon. gent. (Mr. Sheridan), not now in his place. He merely mentioned this, to shew, that the right hon. gent. did not discountenance, or very highly blame the system. There were two descriptions of volunteers, namely, those trained and exercised under the compulsory clauses included in the first class; and, 2ndly, those formed under the acts originally framed upon the subject. This distinction, however, would be obviously seen, that in case of actual invasion, or the appearance of the enemy upon the coast, those enrolled as volunteers would be liable to serve the same as the first class, which class would, upon vacancies arising in the regiments of the line, be turned over to fill up those vacancies, as his Majesty might think fit. Volunteers of the former description, therefore, could not be entitled to exemptions claimed by the latter. He would ask gentlemen, whether so large a number as that composing the present volunteer force could be got together, without producing considerable dissatisfaction, upon the terms which some were inclined to suppose? It never was the intention of government that the class alluded to should be entitled to the exemptions further than from service in the militia.—With respect to the exemptions from the army of reserve, to which the right hon. gent. had adverted, it was never in the contemplation of his Majesty's government, and had been so expressly stated, that no volunteers entering subsequent to the 22d June, should be exempt from the ballot for the army of reserve, but those who entered *bona fide* previous to that period, were to be entitled to the exemptions. The doubts entertained were, whether or not these corps having been accepted under the general provisions of the defence acts, were taken out of the provisions by the subsequent volunteer act. This question was submitted for the consideration and opinion of his Majesty's law officers. He had to congratulate the House, that upwards of 500,000 men entered of the first class, of the ages from 17 to 45, unmarried; when once a man entered the volunteer corps he would be much more likely to make a good soldier. Nay, the volunteer system so far from being injurious, was advantageous to the recruiting service in general. In proof of this, he instanced two corps, the Norwich, and the St. George's volunteers, from both of which the military habits acquired by the men had

induced them to enlist in the regulars, in a far greater proportion than the same number of men otherwise would have done, during both the last and present war. From the St. George's corps, from 11th March, 1795, to 1801, out of 600, or at most 780 men, 94 had entered the navy, and 337 into other regiments. During the present war, from the same corps, 40 had already enlisted. So of the Norwich corps, consisting of 300, 25 had, during this war, already entered the army. He mentioned this to shew that the volunteer system did not retard the recruiting the army of reserve.—With respect to the election of officers on which some strange opinions had been formed, the right hon. gent. seemed to think there were two points presented themselves; 1st, as to the matter of right in the first formation of the corps to elect their own officers; and 2dly, in case of vacancy, the right to supply that vacancy by ballot. The right hon. gent. must have completely mistaken him, if he supposed that, on a former occasion, he had even admitted either the one claim or the other. It had never been recognized by any act of the legislature, nor was it in fact the intention of government to give that right. No such faith had been pledged, in this instance; but where it occurred it ought to be considered on the part of government as sacred. It was a totally different thing from the first formation of the corps, and their subsequent efficacy as a military body. In the first instance, it might be requisite to allow them to present officers for the approval of the colonel commandant, by him to be transmitted to the lord lieut. of the county, from thence to the Sec. of State, and from him to the throne, for the approval of his Majesty. The impolicy of canvassing for the election of officers would be obvious. Suppose the corps were called out into actual service and a vacancy of 3 or 4 officers in each corps was to arise, the time that would be taken up in canvassing and balloting to supply the vacancies would be of the greatest detriment to the service. In fact, the point of practice in this particular had been completely settled, there was, consequently, in his opinion, no necessity for going into the discussion. The right hon. gent. then adverted to the observations made by Mr. Grenville, with respect to the arms for the use of the volunteers, and contended that if any gentleman thought blame imputable to government for not making a better provision in that respect, the same degree of blame would attach upon the government during the last seven years of the late war. In order to shew that his Majesty's present government were more upon

the alert, and provided better for the defence of the kingdoms, he would state a list of the quantity of arms in the Tower, and the several out ports, for several years past. In 1755, previous to the breaking out of the seven years war, there was 36,098 stand of fire arms in the Tower, &c.; in 1775, during the American war, 98,488; in 1783, at the conclusion of the war, 94,786; in 1790, during the Spanish armament, 92,131, in 1793, commencement of the French war, 53,482; and in 1803, at the commencement of the present war, no less than 329,246 stand of arms; he did not state this to shew any superior attention of the ordnance department, but merely to prove that government had not been remiss. With respect to the number of arms delivered out:—In the beginning of 1803, there were delivered out 101,034 stand of arms, and up to the 27th of Feb. of the present year (the day on which he was speaking), the quantity of 365,426 stand of arms, exclusive of pikes, &c., amounting to 18,000. Of this number 217,196 were delivered to the volunteers of Great Britain, and 32,051 to those of Ireland. A very considerable portion of arms had been furnished at the expense of the volunteers themselves; and from the best information which he could gain, upwards of 250,000 fire arms had been provided, for adding to the general defence of the country. Every thing on the part of government had been done which was practicable.—He then took notice of the letter alluded to by the right hon. gent., as to the resignations. He did not mean to defend or speak in favour of the style, for it was written by himself; but he wished to explain to the House, that he meant they should be dismissed from their corps, as a punishment for not having done their duty in such a manner as they ought to have done. He might, perhaps, be asked, why, if he thought so, he had so industriously circulated the opinion of the Attorney General? His answer to this was, that a difference of opinion having arisen in the minds of many on this subject, it had been deemed necessary to take the legal opinion of his Majesty's great law-officers, the Attorney and Solicitor General; and these gentlemen, after a mature consideration, thought that from the nature of the contract, and the tenor of the several acts of Parliament, the volunteers could not resign at their own will and pleasure. As soon as these opinions were received, he thought it then immediately became his duty to circulate them as widely as possible, both for the benefit of the volunteers, and the justices, who were liable to be called on to act in

many cases when fines were fixed, to be levied by them; and under such circumstances, he would be glad to know what any gent. would have said to him, in case he had not circulated them antecedent to the recess? The meeting being very short, it was desirable to avoid all differences as to the volunteer services. Since then, the opinion of the King's Bench had decided that the volunteers had at present a right to resign, but that when called out there could be no doubt they were bound to serve.—He said, that on the subject of beacons, the lords-lieutenants communicated with the generals of the district in the maritime as well as the inland counties; and the generals of districts with those who were to carry them into execution. He acknowledged that some difficulties had arisen as to the expense; but it was now settled, that where there were naval signals the Admiralty should pay the expense; and where they belonged to the interior, it should be defrayed by the commander in chief.—Having thus gone through these several heads, he wished the House to suffer the bill to go to a Committee, in order that it might receive the benefit of the united wisdom of the House. He should for one, be ready to listen to all amendments; but he hoped gentlemen would content themselves with doing no more than was necessary. The system being altogether voluntary, too much coercion and strictness might be found inconvenient. The first inducement of the volunteers to offer their services had been the love of their country, and the ardent desire and enthusiasm they felt, as well as the necessity there appeared to them that they should take up arms for its defence and security. Every thing should therefore, be done that could render their services effectual; and he had no doubt but the volunteers would be found fully adequate to the high raised expectations that had been formed of them, and that they would prove an invincible bulwark of defence for the protection and security of all that was near and dear to them and to the nation as freemen and Britons.

Mr. Pitt.—Sir: from the opinion of the right hon. secretary of state, that this discussion should be confined within narrow limits, and should apply solely to the consideration of the measure immediately before the House, I decidedly differ; and with the sentiments of my right hon. friend on the lower bench (*Mr. Windham*) that we are now called upon to take into view every thing connected with the national defence, I entirely concur. Although the volunteer

system naturally forms the first subject for our deliberation, as it is the principal feature in the picture, and that upon which we must, under all the circumstances, ground our reliance for ultimate security, yet the army, the militia, and all the other branches of our public force press upon our attention, and require to be examined upon the present occasion. Whether the volunteer system be radically wrong, or inadequate to its object, is not the question proper for the House now to consider; but how far any defects which experience has rendered manifest in its original formation may be removed, and how the detail of the measure may be improved; how far, in a word, it may be rendered efficient. This, in my judgment, is the turn which the debate should take. With a sense of the situation in which the country is placed; of the danger which has been so long suspended over us, and of the crisis which, according to all appearances and information, is so rapidly approaching, we should devote ourselves to the consideration of the best means of amending and advancing to perfection, the only force of equal magnitude now within our reach; to devise, not only how this force is to be prepared for the first approach of the danger which menaces us, but how its spirit and efficacy may be preserved and made competent to meet the full extent of the danger, and effectually to guard the country. That the enthusiasm which may enable men to meet the first attack, can last long, it might be permitted to hope; but that it would, no rational man would be very sanguine in calculating upon. It becomes, therefore, necessary to communicate to the volunteers every instruction that is practicable, in order to assimilate them to a regular army. That it is impossible fairly to investigate the nature and tendency of the volunteer system, without referring to the regular army and militia, I readily admit, and that it is proper to inquire how far any farther augmentations of the one or the other is practicable or desirable; also, how far the volunteer system interferes with either of these objects. But these are topics upon which I shall trouble the House by and by. At present I wish, principally, to dwell upon the methods to be resorted to, in order to communicate to the volunteers all the instruction they want, and to the system all the improvement of which it may be susceptible; for I am certain that this must form the great basis of our strength, the important instrument of our defence, the medium by which we must contrive to bring the country safely out of its dangers, and to lay

asleep those apprehensions which, from the calamitous destinies of the present times, have been excited by a gigantic power suddenly erected, to disturb the world, to desolate a large portion of Europe, and to lay the foundation; if not resolutely and vigorously resisted, of future and incalculable misery. Such resistance it is become the fate of this country to make, and I trust it will be its glory effectually to accomplish. That its resources and the zeal of the people is competent to the undertaking, and the achievement, no man can doubt; that zeal which has been displayed in a manner so extraordinary as to surprise even the most ardent admirers of the British character, and to gratify the most anxious friends to British independence; that zeal which has not merely seconded, but far outrun the wants of the country, and very much indeed the wishes of the government. Into the principle of the system upon which the force produced by this zeal has been constructed I shall not now inquire. That is a point which has been already amply discussed, and satisfactorily settled. The question fairly is, whether in addition to our regular army and militia, it is practicable to procure, from the population of the country, a force sufficiently large to meet the magnitude of the dangers which threaten us by any other and better means. It does not appear to me that we could. Certainly, as to the amount of the force, an equal number could not be collected by any other than compulsory means; and if the volunteer plan were abandoned, those means, however obnoxious, must have been resorted to, or the security of the country would have been very precarious. From those considerations, I approved of the volunteer system. At all events, whatever the imperfections of that system may be, I feel that I cannot be contradicted in the assertion that no other can be now looked to as a substitute. The thing cannot be done away. The danger is too near and imminent to allow of a total change. It is the system to which we must resort to meet the present difficulty, and I will go further and say, that it is that, if carried to the degree of perfection of which it is capable, upon which we might calculate, in combination with other descriptions of ordinary force, for the future and permanent security of the empire.—But whether this system may or may not be brought to that state of discipline which seems necessary to reconcile my right hon. friend (Mr. Windham) to its existence, I contend that this is not the time to think of removing it altogether, of treading back the steps we have taken, of providing another

force at a time when the danger is at our gates—when, as one might say, we are within gun-shot of the enemy. This, surely then, is not the moment to entertain such a proposition; and if not, the improvement of the system that is established, is, of course, the object for our deliberation. Whatever differences of opinion, therefore, may prevail between the right hon. gent. on the opposite bench, (Mr. Fox) or my right hon. friend on the bench below him (Mr. Windham) and me, I must naturally expect from them, that they will not differ with me on this point, whatever they may wish to do at a future period—that, when we are in expectation of an immediate attack from the enemy—when the danger is announced from the highest authority to be close upon us, and when we are about to encounter a tremendous storm raised by a power the most gigantic, perhaps, the world has ever seen—when we are threatened by an attempt on our liberty and existence, dictated by slavish power and inordinate ambition, it behoves us to consult our immediate security, and not to allow of even the idea of disbanding so large a body as 400,000 men, however imperfectly constructed they may be. We should rather examine how far this force may be rendered effective; and, with this view, I shall state to the House the mode that, in my judgment, ought to be pursued. How far ministers have failed, heretofore, in the performance of their duty with respect to the volunteers; how far they have wished to carry into complete execution the system of which they appear to approve, I will not now stop to inquire, farther than to say, that they should have been more attentive to promote the regulation of the several volunteer corps. They should have communicated more precise instructions through the medium of the lords-lieutenants of counties, as to the best method of training the volunteers, of procuring a regular attendance at drills, and enforcing attention to discipline when there. These are points of arrangement very material to consider, and ministers should even now, and I hope it is not too late, look to objects of so much consequence. I do not mean that any superfluous directions should be given to the volunteers, nor do I ask to have them trained up in the way in which the advocates of an armed peasantry would recommend, who seem to imagine that such peasantry could be converted into that quality of force, namely, light troops, for which, of all others, they are least qualified. But, I would have the volunteers instructed in all the necessary evolutions, and this I am decidedly of opi-

nion, would be far the best course to pursue, particularly as it must be admitted, that, under existing circumstances, it would be quite absurd, if not dangerous, to think of proposing a new system to supersede that of the volunteers. To promote this improvement in the discipline of the volunteers, is a thing so obviously necessary, and so highly desirable, that I should hope no minor difficulties will be allowed to stand in the way, that no mistaken or narrow notions of economy will operate to impede such an important object, but that the volunteer force will be rendered as perfect in military discipline, as the nature of the institution, the peculiar characters of its members, and the proximity of our dangers will admit. When I speak of the dangers of the country, I do not mean it to be understood although I think the system of our defence has made a progress far short of what it might and ought to have done, that even with our volunteer force, so imperfectly instructed as they are, with our other resources, I should feel any dread for the result of meeting the most formidable attack the enemy can possibly contrive to make; but yet I feel that the House will not have performed its duty if, after the solemn warning it has received from ministers themselves, of the near approach of the enemy, any thing that can be done shall by any possibility be neglected; that any contrivance shall be overlooked which can at all enable us to contend, I will say collectively and individually, with the powerful and inveterate enemy that disturbs us, and to contend with such effect as not only to accomplish his final discomfiture, but to convince him and his infatuated adherents, that any attempt to invade and subjugate England can only originate in the wildest ambition, and must terminate in disgrace and ruin to the army that has the hardihood to venture it. We must make such efforts as to fix a lasting impression, not only on the enemy himself, but on the rest of Europe, that the man who, led on by confidence and daring to attempt the subjection of England even single-handed, shall meet the fate that the pride and courage of Englishmen, animated by a just estimate of their liberty, and other advantages, must ever prepare for any invading foe. We must leave in this contest such an example to our posterity, as shall be honourable to ourselves and conducive to their security. We must not look alone to our defence against danger. Much more important consequences must be achieved. As to the extent of time which the contest is likely to occupy, should the enemy succeed

in making good a landing in any considerable force, no man can pretend to say positively ; but it is the peculiar duty of Parliament and government to provide for every event. It will not be enough that such provision should enable us to come victorious out of our contest with the enemy. Our triumph must be signal and decisive. We must resist the enemy at every foot of his progress ; but we must take every care that no unnecessary sacrifices shall be made, that the blood of our countrymen shall on every possible occasion be spared. To these points, it is our imperative duty to attend ; for, surely, if ever there was a great trust confided to the liberality and justice of Parliament, it is the means of protecting the lives and blood of their fellow-citizens, who have rushed forward to the post of danger, when the safety of their country was menaced. We should not consent to purchase our security by the sacrifice of our countrymen, if such a sacrifice could at all be avoided. From these considerations, I conjure the House to point their attention particularly to the consideration of the means of rendering the volunteer force as efficient as possible. That much yet remains to be done, and for which this bill does not provide, I feel the most perfect conviction ; and, although I am of opinion that it would be better the alterations in detail, which I think necessary, should originate with his Majesty's ministers, who are best qualified to give complete effect to such alterations, yet my sense of duty will not suffer me to neglect the propositions which appear to me eligible. To these propositions I shall strictly confine myself, and abstaining from all allusion to whatever I may think on the present state of politics, or to the conduct of ministers hitherto, I shall apply myself solely to the examination of our national defence. That appears to me to be the first and most interesting subject. It ought to occupy the attention of every man. It is quite enough to fill the mind of any man. This, therefore, claiming my consideration, in preference to every other subject, I look with great concern to the imperfections of the volunteer system, recollecting that it is pushed to an extent, far beyond any thing that was foreseen when the country was first declared in danger ; and, considering its present magnitude, I regret to find that it is not more advanced in military quality, that it is still extremely inadequate to its object, and that the proper means of promoting its discipline have not been as yet adopted. These means, which I deem most material, I conceive to be ; 1st, the opportunity of regular instruc-

tions ; 2dly, the securing attendance at drill ; and 3dly, the enforcing silence, steadiness, &c. when at drill. On the first of these points, I beg to ask of any thinking man, whether it is possible for the volunteer to acquire a sufficient knowledge of the simplest part of military discipline, by attending drill only 20 days in the year, and, generally, no more than two or three hours each day—particularly taking into account the inadequacy of the instructions, &c. I am aware that these arguments may be said to offer objections to the system altogether ; but these objections I feel to be removable, by attending to the alterations I have suggested and shall hereafter propose. What may be done at a future time, I shall not now enter into, but merely confine myself to the manner in which they should make the best use of the time that yet remains to prepare them for the impending danger ; and this preparation should be stimulated and encouraged by the conduct of Parliament. The spirit of our gallant volunteers, so long tried by suspense, may be otherwise relaxed. Danger being so often menaced and so long suspended, their zeal may be weakened, unless Parliament shall do its duty by giving to those valiant patriots every possible means of rendering their exertions in the cause of their country completely effectual. This done, and your views fully explained, I am persuaded that the volunteers will accede to any proposal that the necessity of the case may suggest. Such is the nature of the minds of Englishmen, that I have not the shadow of doubt, that there is no difficulty which they would not encounter, and no privation to which they would not submit, when they shall understand that such difficulties and privations are necessary to succeed in the glorious cause committed to their charge, of rescuing their country from danger, and establishing the security of their countrymen. In order, then, to promote the efficiency which I have in view, I would propose, that the volunteer corps should be encouraged to go on permanent duty, suppose for a week, or two, or three, as was the case last summer in particular districts on the coast, always taking care to assemble the corps in the place convenient to their native home. For this purpose, I should propose that a small bounty be given to each volunteer who would consent to march on such permanent duty, namely, 7s. per week, independently of 1s. per day, to every volunteer who should so march. This plan would, I am persuaded, do more towards promoting discipline and military habits among the men, than any drilling at different and detached periods. I

had an opportunity of witnessing the salutary effects of such a system last summer. About 2 or 300,000*l.* would be quite sufficient to defray the expence of it. Surely it cannot be pretended that Parliament manage with judgment and integrity the purse of their constituents, if they refuse to open it, in order to advance this sum for a purpose of such high importance, to save the lives and property of the people, and to bring the contest in which we are engaged to a speedy and glorious conclusion.—Now, as to the mode of instructing the volunteer corps, I mentioned before Christmas very fully the propriety of appointing field officers, &c. to such battalions as applied for them, and I am still of the same opinion, as none of the arguments which have been advanced against my recommendation appear to me to have any weight, and as I know, from my own observation, the advantages that would result from it. I would propose that the instruction of volunteer corps should be assisted by the regular officers stationed in the several districts, particularly those on the coast, on some parts of which no less than from 80 to 100,000 men might be speedily collected. I would also recommend the adoption of some system not harsh, to enforce attendance at drill, which is particularly necessary. This might be done by regulations, to which each man might subscribe, imposing fines on defaulters, rendering the inattention at parades liable to arrest and detention, until tried before a magistrate, who should have the power of commuting any fine for a short imprisonment of two or three days. I agree with the right hon. mover, that no change should be made in the volunteer regulations that is not called for by absolute necessity, and of such a nature do I conceive the proposition I have submitted; so, I believe, almost every man who has witnessed their parades must confess; and when the cause and object of this change should be explained to the volunteers themselves, I am satisfied none of them would be found to murmur, much less to resign, particularly when such communication should be accompanied by the intimation contained in this bill, that they might resign if they did not think proper to remain on such conditions.—As to the right of volunteers to recommend their officers, about which so much has been said, it strikes me that there is no material difference upon that point, if gentlemen would endeavour truly to understand it. While a controul was acknowledged to exist in the commanding officer of each corps, in the lords lieutenants of counties, and finally in ministers, the claim was frivolous to insist on, and yet it would be

dangerous to concede it, even in appearance. I have at the same time a wish and a hope, that a commanding officer will, upon occasion of any vacancy, consult with temper the sentiments of the corps, but not in anything like the forms of a popular election, to take their individual suffrages.—Here the right hon. gent. entered into a comprehensive review of the progress of the regular army and militia since the commencement of the war, and contended that neither the recruiting of the one, nor the balloting of the other, was so much impeded by the increase of the volunteers as some gentlemen seemed anxious to impress on the minds of the House, while he thought, on the contrary, that the volunteer system would, by proper modifications, tend to the regular maintenance and progressive augmentation of our public force. The complained-of slowness in the ballot for the army of reserve and militia might be easily accounted for, from the circumstance of the great number to be ballotted for in the first year of the war; and this, independently of the volunteer system, was sufficient to produce a considerable difficulty in recruiting for the army. To provide a resource to recruit the regular army, he would propose that a system, somewhat modelled on the principle of the army of reserve, should be kept up, and that from that body any that should volunteer for general service should be supplied by fresh ballot. One reason for this plan was, that the army should not altogether depend on the contingency of an ordinary recruiting; and another, that the militia should be held sacred, and that no volunteers for general service should be sought for from that body in future. The proportion between this army of reserve and the militia to be fixed, and that the militia should be gradually reduced from its present establishment to its old standard, and that according as vacancies may occur in that body, a ballot should take place for an equal number, not to fill up such vacancies, but to go to the army of reserve. Thus as the one body was reduced the other would be augmented, that the change having a gradual operation, would not be likely to produce confusion in any branch of our public force. He was aware, however, that this proposed change would incur some unpopularity, and some pressure on the parishes; but to this he would say, that such pressure ought to be softened, if they could not be remedied, and if they could not be remedied they ought to be endured. To this he had no doubt the people would submit cheerfully, when they reflected on the value of the object for which they had to contend, and that nothing could di-

minish their devout gratitude to Providence upon a comparison of their situations with those countries which, neglecting timely precaution, and refusing perhaps to suffer small losses in the first instance, committed themselves to the will of that power which now employed all its resources to assail this country. The right honourable gentleman particularly urged the introduction of a plan to limit the bounties to be given to substitutes, that it should be always less than that to recruits for the regular army; the bounties to which also should be limited, in order to put a stop to the proceedings of those pests to society called crimps.—He thought it would be wise to allot a certain number of regiments to be recruited in certain counties; and that the recruiting officer should be stationary in such counties. Thus he conceived the recruits would be more easily obtained, through the connection that would grow up between the people, the recruiting officers, and the regiments to which they might belong; and the consequence of the system would produce an *esprit de corps* that would be highly advantageous.—The right hon. gent. took notice of the propriety of attending somewhat more to the system of fortifications, and also improving our naval defence, which he stated from his own knowledge to be very defective. While our danger was greater, and our resources also, than at any former period, he complained that our state of naval preparation was much lower. He declared, that in this statement he was not influenced by the slightest prejudice against any man; on the contrary, in the whole of his observations he wished to keep aloof from every description of asperity, which he thought ought not upon any account to be introduced in the course of this discussion. This was not a time for the operation of any party spirit. Every mind should be engaged, every heart should be devoted, to the consideration of the public defence, and in the prosecution of it he hoped that ministers would weigh well the sacred duty they had to perform, the awful responsibility of their situation. It would not be enough for them to say that our preparations were great, they ought to be complete. He might be told that the danger was not so great as he imagined, and that the state of our preparations was much greater; perhaps such was the fact, but he spoke the sentiments which all appearances, among which were the declarations of ministers themselves, fully justified. The right hon. gent. concluded with stating, that he had many other observations to make on the several projects he had mentioned, but should waive them

till a future opportunity. In the mean time, he declared that he was not so obstinately attached to any opinion of his own, as to decline, upon such an important subject, giving the utmost attention to the suggestion of others.

Mr. *Windham* was of opinion, that the bill was inadequate to the object which it professed to have in view, that it would not be productive of any real or lasting advantage, and that it would end in smoke. His right hon. friend (Mr. Pitt) had defended the system, principally on the ground that it was particularly necessary at the present moment, when, from the urgency of the case, no measure of equal advantage could be devised. This was, however, in his opinion, by no means a decisive mode of arguing. We were not called on merely to provide for the exigency of the present moment, but to consider what would be the species of force which would be adequate to our future defence. The danger against which we were called on to provide, was not one which must infallibly assail us at the present moment. We could not prescribe the conduct of the enemy who threatened us; nor could we know whether the majestic preparations which he was making were brought to full maturity, and would be ready to attack us to-morrow, or for twelve months to come. The enemy by whom we were at present menaced, was undoubtedly one which we were called on by every tie to repel; and to do so with effect, and certainty of success, the whole population of the country, he thought, ought to be employed.—So far, therefore, he was an advocate for voluntary service; but he could not agree that the voluntary force to be employed ought to be of the nature contended for in the present bill. His right hon. friend had pointed out the danger of a sudden diminution of the volunteer establishment. He unquestionably did not wish that any precipitate step of that nature ought to be adopted. He agreed with his rt. hon. friend in thinking, that terror was not the mode of procuring a continuance of a voluntary offer of service, and, on that principle, he approved of the option given to volunteers to withdraw their services, as being the best means of encouraging their continuance. The conditions, however, with which that option was clogged were so unpalatable, that he was convinced the measure would not succeed, but that many would avail themselves of the option and withdraw. His great objection to the present volunteer system was the effect which it had in obstructing the recruiting for the army, which was only

supplied through the medium of the army of reserve. He did not say that the volunteer system was in itself an obstruction to the recruiting of the regular army, but that by the number of exemptions from serving in the militia and army of reserve, which it occasioned, the field was contracted, the bounties to substitutes were raised above all due proportion, and the difficulty of procuring recruits was rendered almost invincible. Thus, though it did not in itself prevent recruiting, it did so by its consequences.—His right hon. friend had said, that as the demand for substitutes became less, the bounties would also become less. He, however, apprehended, that it would be rather found, that as the demand became less the means of supplying that demand had become less in a greater proportion. By the difficulty of making up their ballots, and the expense attendant on the enormous bounties given, many parishes had been reduced to the greatest distress. Could he then say, that it was proper to continue the volunteer system under such disadvantages? Ought we alone to regard the present moment, and through fear of lessening the present volunteer establishment, endanger our safety in succeeding years? He could not agree with his right hon. friend as to the inutility of a body of armed peasantry. He should only ask, if a body of 1000 men of this description was collected, would an experienced officer think them of no use, because they had not been trained? He surely would not. He would employ them in *some* way, and that way would be no other than loosely annoying the enemy. If they made little impression at first, experience would improve them. The practice of war would teach them the best mode of proceeding. Not having learnt the manœuvres which are only to be acquired by exercise at drill, they would not be of the full service which might be expected from regular troops. Whatever service, however, was to be expected from them, it would be got in some degree from the first, and they would constantly improve. If they did no good, they would do no harm. If they were not able to cope with the enemy themselves, they would not set the example to others to run away.—In the other way, if not brought to a certain degree of proficiency and military skill, if not trained to a certain extent, the volunteers, by mingling with the regulars, would impede and confuse, rather than serve any useful purpose. The great error was in supposing, that army, militia, and volunteers were only different stages of the same thing: that as

certain anatomists had thought that membranes in certain cases became cartilages, and cartilages became bones, so it seemed to be supposed, that volunteers would, by degrees, grow into militia, and militia in time harden into regular army.—It was not sufficient to say, because an improper system had been gone into, that it ought to be persevered in: that they had got into a lane in which there was no turning, and, therefore, that it behoved them to go on. This was his objection to the ideas thrown out by his right hon. friend. If they continued the exemptions, with the other part of the system, they did so at the expense of counteracting the other part of the force of the country. It had been said, that a great many volunteers had entered as recruits. Of that he could entertain no doubt, nor was it possible to be otherwise where the whole population of the country were volunteers. With equal truth had it been asserted, that the Roman Catholics were the only disaffected persons in Ireland, in cases where the rebellion had broken out in a part of the country where none but Roman Catholics resided.—The right hon. gent. then alluded to the conduct of the volunteers at Chester, who attacked the gaol and liberated one of their companions. He did not mean to describe this as the most atrocious of all offences; nor would he fear to say, that however criminal the conduct, in the motives of these men might be discovered possibly even a degree of virtue. They might be impelled by a generous sentiment of rescuing a comrade unjustly carried away. But it was not thus that the law contemplated such proceedings, and, certainly, not the professors and administrators of the law, who were never backward on these occasions in thundering forth their horror and reprobation, and in repressing these acts of *virtue or excusable irregularity*, by a little punishment called hanging. It seemed pretty obvious, that ministers had erected a force of which they now stood in awe, when it was mentioned that the only excuse made for not punishing so flagrant an act was, that the perpetrators of it could not be found out. He declared his horror of unequal punishments, and contrasted the condition of these volunteers with that of the man who was hanged while he (Mr. Windham) was secretary at war, for destroying opposite to the war office, not a gaol not a place of authorized confinement, known to the law and placed immediately under the royal protection, where none could be put but for just cause and by regular process, but a vile crimping-house, the ap-

propriate seat of violence and abuse, against which every thing was to be presumed, and where the presumption could rarely exceed the reality of the fact.—In other points of view, the volunteer system, as now conducted, was seriously to be considered. On the occasion of a general election, for instance, when corps might set up candidates of their own, or espouse the cause of one or other of those already declared; how was the rule to be applied of sending during an election, armed men out of the town? It would be, in fact, to send the town out of itself. To the plan of his right hon. friend he must decidedly object. It was enforced, as it was sure to be, with great eloquence and ingenuity, but, *materiem superabit opus*. The suggestions themselves were not the more judicious, because they were set forth with great ability. However he might wish to have the energy of the country displayed upon adequate occasions, he did not wish it to be rendered a military country. Even if that were the purpose, the way to accomplish it would be to render every man a soldier. Those countries in which the system was pursued of making all the citizens soldiers, were, in fact, the countries that were least military. France, Austria, Prussia, all the great military countries, pursued a totally different course. Switzerland, if in some sense a military country, was not military in virtue of its militia, but from the number of its inhabitants who had acquired experience in foreign service. Geneva, in which that was not the case, but in which every citizen was enrolled in the militia, was certainly not a military state; and the same was eminently true at this moment of America. Ministers should seriously set about the great work under consideration, and atone for past neglect, by sedulously labouring to create an effective force, which could co-operate with, or support the regular force of the country, when the urgency of the occasion should require.

Lord Castlereagh said, he had heard nothing in the speech of the last right hon. gent. that differed materially from what he had urged so often before; and that with respect to the ill effects of the volunteer system on other branches of service, he had by no means in any respect established that point. As for the discipline of the volunteer corps, certainly there was no man who would contend for the propriety of attempting to give them all the perfection of regular troops, but, on the other hand, there was equal impropriety in being too lax and inattentive to their discipline. There was certainly a medium to be observed in such a case. On the

question of irregulars, he recollected very well the case of a body of armed peasants in Suabia, during the war between France and Austria, which did great annoyance and mischief to the French armies, particularly when defeated or distressed from any local circumstances. But he could not avoid observing, that the first *levée en masse* in France, which was employed early in the late war, was of a description coming much nearer our own volunteers, and were a much more efficient force than the Suabian peasants. The very generals who had commanded those French soldiers declared our volunteers to be equal to them.—As to political danger, he was quite insensible to any thing of the kind. When he considered the purity of views with which they were embodied, the mode of appointing their officers, and how they were all connected with the Crown, and that they could exist no longer than Parliament thought their services were required, he could not possibly see any ground of danger.—His lordship then condemned, in marked terms, the conduct pursued out of doors, and patronized by too many, of collecting with avidity every ridiculous story, or disagreeable circumstance, in a body of 380,000 men, and circulating it for the purpose of depreciating them. As to the riot at Chester, it was in the hands of the Attorney General; however, the men were turned out of the corps with every mark of disgrace. But if the right hon. gent. would, with equal curiosity, examine any regiment in the King's service, he believed he would discover little occasional irregularities in an equal proportion. Indeed, were he to consult the orderly book of a new-raised green regiment of regulars, he should not be surprised to hear him lamenting the risk of the constitution of the country through the defective system of the army.—His lordship then thanked the right hon. gent. under the gallery, (Mr. Pitt) for the great attention he had given to the mode of recruiting the army; a subject which had, indeed, occupied much of his own reflexion. There would, however, be a better opportunity for the discussion of that point. — It might be then found quite expedient to make the militia sacred from the recruiting service. The difficulty of recruiting was so great in various points of view, that if adopted as a general system, it would drive Parliament to the necessity of increasing the militia; that force being so much more easily raised, merely because it is raised by ballot. The next point, and one of great consequence, to which he wished to request the attention of the House, was the

subject of naval defence, on which the right hon. gent. under the gallery had expressed a doubt, though he was happy to observe, without any disposition to censure that establishment. On this subject he was glad to be able to present the House with accurate statements, in which they would see, on a comparison of our present state of naval defence in an advanced period of the last war, that our exertions had been very great. To begin with ships of the line: we had at present in commission 91; last war that number was not reached till the third year. Of frigates we had now manned 129; a number we had not last war, till 1798. Of armed ships of various kinds we had now 208, which was as numerous as in 1798. So that, upon the whole, we had 411 ships of war already, though not a year had elapsed since the commencement of hostilities; whereas last war, at the end of the year 1795, we had but 375. At the end of the first year of this war we find ourselves as strong in naval defence as in the fourth year of the last war, when we gained the two great and celebrated victories of Lord Howe and Lord Bridport. All this statement was exclusive of the E. India Company's shipping, which consisted of 20 ships; of those of the Trinity equipped and manned, of 10 ships; of various small craft to the number of 602, at different ports; of the armed vessels in the dock yards 373; and of armed vessels on the Irish coast 187; making altogether 1,122 armed vessels, exclusive of our regular ships of war. Our seamen too, amounted to 77,012, whereas it was not till the end of two years in last war, that they equalled that number. Our marines were 11,990, which they were not last war till 1795, a space of about three years. From all this statement of facts, his lordship concluded, that the present state of naval defence was such as must give complete satisfaction to every person who candidly considered that important subject.

Mr. Pitt begged leave to say a very few words in explanation. He assured the noble lord that he should feel more happy in finding that every thing practicable had been done in the line of naval defence, than that any of his apprehensions of another kind should be realized. But to be convinced of this, some further explanation than that just offered should be given. He thought the comparative statements which had been given did not proceed upon a fair principle: there certainly was no comparison between the first years of a war, when the previous peace establishment had been only 18,000 men, and that in which it had been

50,000—where they had passed to a war from a state of profound peace, and where hostilities were resorted to after a continual apprehension of war.—He thought it should be shewn what progress was made in that species of defence to counteract attempts at invasion, by means of shallow water?—Were the comparisons drawn from the state of preparation at those periods of the late war when invasion was more particularly thought of, as in 1797 and 1798, and in the summer of the year 1801, the difference would be more apparent, and the contrast more visible with those steps which had been lately and tardily taken for counteracting the designs of the enemy in these particulars. He felt it a duty due to himself and to the country, to point the attention of the House to this important topic—a duty with which no former partiality or private friendships should interfere, and which, therefore, he should bring forward in a more specific form to the consideration of the House.

Mr. Whitbread said, at that late hour he should not trouble the House at much length. There were, however, some topics on which he was desirous to say a few words. The first and most important of these was the power, in the volunteer corps, of immediately appointing their officers. He would not call this a right. But he contended, they ought to have the power of recommending officers through the lord lieutenants, to his Majesty. He would venture to say, that all the volunteers, in offering their service, entertained the expectation of appointing their own officers in this manner. He then alluded to a late transaction concerning the Southwark volunteers, and said, he would declare plainly, that if the right honourable secretary of state proceeded to the extreme he threatened in this respect, he would lose the greater part of the volunteer force. The volunteer system was to supply the deficiency of the Defence Act. It was acknowledged by ministers, that the act was not practicable had it been attempted to be carried into effect: the volunteer system was, therefore, resorted to. But the House must see, that the system was of frail texture, and, if it should crumble away, the country must return to the measures of the Defence Act, inadequate to the necessity as they were acknowledged to be.—Mr. Whitbread next adverted to the plea of economy urged by ministers in behalf of the volunteer system. They ought not to attempt to impose upon the people, by telling them of its economy, when every man knows that it is more burthensome to the public than if a more effective force had been raised.—He

then took a view of the attempt to enforce more rigid discipline on the volunteer corps. He contended there was no power of doing so. He spoke of discipline in minute things, which was injudiciously attempted. In the first instance, perhaps, a general plan might have been established, for all the volunteer corps. But now each must be chiefly governed in its own manner. The number of days of drill, for instance, must vary, according to the occupation of the men, and the season of the year. In harvest time, volunteers in the country could not attend to drill. It was impossible; and it was not policy to expect it, if practicable. If the enemy was actually in the country, all occupation must cease in the seat of the invasion, but that of actual war. But in a state of preparation, the ordinary occupations of labouring men must go on. During a certain part of the year, there was no drill in his corps; but that was brought up by more close application to the drill at other times. There must be, in this and many other respects, a great latitude for the volunteer corps. He was glad there were now 26 days' pay, for exercise, to be allowed the men. Four days, beyond twenty, had been warmly contended for in vain; but now six were generously given; yet, he could not but observe, that this was done without the authority of parliament. It was done on the mere order of his Majesty's confidential servants. He noticed this for the presumption with which it was done; however, he was obliged to them for it. The times for a complaint against his Majesty's servants, for such unconstitutional conduct, were unhappily past, and he should not comment on that.—It would have been unreasonable to have demanded of ministers, that all the minute parts of the volunteer system should be at once perfect; but he expected to have seen, and all the country expected to have seen, a grand machine, effecting its original purpose, and going on without difficulty, as to all its great movements. But what is the case? No part of the system is free from embarrassment; no part is understood; all is confusion. He really did not believe that ministers, at that very time, understood either what they meant to enforce, or what to abstain from.—Mr. Whitbread then spoke of the imbecility of ministers, in their preparations for war, at its commencement, although they had declared the just jealousy they must have of the armaments in the ports of France, previous to that time. He did not know that the existence of those armaments had ever been proved to the country; but, if they were, what preparations had been made? Ministers talked

like children of the danger, and were as unprepared as children (*Mr. Addington said across the table "The Militia."*). The militia, indeed, had been called out, but he did not expect them to take great credit merely for that measure. When the army of reserve was thought of, a measure so highly extolled; every means that could possibly raise the price of substitutes, and so injure the recruiting service, and produce other mischiefs, were adopted. Among other things an embargo was suddenly laid on vessels going down channel, which added to the alarm, and made the price of substitutes enormous. The army of reserve has therefore failed. It stands still: its numbers cannot be filled. On the 18th of Jan. there were no less than 90, deficient in one place, of the quota 250. The first mistake of ministers, when they proposed the army of reserve, was followed by endeavouring to make volunteers a substitute for it, and then granting the volunteers exemption from the army of reserve, &c. thus destroying the whole recruiting resources of the country.—Mr. Whitbread then observed, that almost every volunteer corps had committees, which he declared it impossible to prevent. He then touched again on the subject of economy, and the precariousness of the subscriptions to maintain the volunteer corps; recommending government at once to meet the expenses of those corps by a parliamentary provision. He earnestly recommended an impartial examination of the real strength of the volunteer corps. He did not believe that it amounted to what was stated, 380,000. And, if that, how much was disciplined, and able to take the field? How many able to march 100 miles from home? He contended that a regular army, to a very large extent, and more economical, might have been raised. In concluding, he reprobated the raising the spirit of the country by brutal and ferocious prints. Foreign invasion was enough to kindle an Englishman's valour, whether it was by the Demi-God of the Thuilleries or the Devil Incarnate of the Printsellers in Piccadilly. Henry IV or Bonaparte were to be dreaded alike as Invaders. Ministers continued to act without any plan or system whatever.

Mr. Tierney explained the circumstances which had occurred in the Southwark corps. He said, that himself and his hon. friend (Mr. Whitbread) were in similar situations in many respects; they were both colonels, both had corps composed of their constituents, and both might be supposed desirous to stand well with them. The fact was, that one of the companies came to a resolution, declar-

ing that they would not serve unless under an officer of their own choosing. Against this proceeding, however desirous to preserve the good will of his constituents, he found himself obliged, in his military character, to protest; and he should have been wanting in his duty to the King, if he had suffered men insisting on such a principle to continue with arms in their hands. In consequence of this affair, another of the companies adhered to the company reduced; but eight out of ten of which the corps consisted never made any pretension to the right claimed by the other two. And now one of those companies had again come forward to serve under the principle which he had held out to them; and twenty-seven of fifty of the other company had petitioned to be allowed to serve in the same manner. This was the whole extent of the affair alluded to by his honourable friend; and he did not see that it had either produced or threatened those disagreeable consequences which had been suggested.

Mr. Fox said, that it was not his intention to go at length into this question at present, there were a few points only on which he begged leave to touch; particularly as being in the nature of remarks on what had passed in the debate, they could not so well be brought forward on a future occasion. The right honourable gentleman under the gallery (Mr. Pitt) had alluded to the conduct of the admiralty; on that subject he was not at present prepared to give any opinion. He confessed that he was partial to the noble lord at the head of that department, he admired his professional talents, and gratefully acknowledged his public services. Lord St. Vincent had all his good wishes, and on this account he most heartily wished him a better defender than Lord Castlereagh. That noble lord had defended the first lord of the admiralty, by a comparison with what had been done by former naval administrations. He talked of the navy in 1755, when in fact, the scale of naval force then was no more a standard of naval force now, than that of 1755 was to be measured by the navies of antiquity. The question was not, what the naval strength of this country in any former war was, but what were the means, and what were the necessities of service, by which our exertions were to be regulated. It was not by referring to dates, and by summing up statements, that the first lord of the admiralty could be justified, nor was it on that ground, he was sure, that Lord St. Vincent would choose to rest his defence. He did not know where, or in what register, the noble lord might have found the arguments

he had used, but precisely the same mode of defence was adopted by the admiralty in the American war, when for two years our navy had been inferior to that of France. It had been said on the ministerial side, that many of the arguments had been used before; it would have been better if it could have been said that they were answered before. Whenever it was contended, that the exertions for the public defence in every department were inadequate, ministers thought it was enough if they had done as much within the first year of war as had ever been done before. But could they be allowed to date their preparations only from March last? He would not say whether those who believed the peace was likely to last were "nature's fools" or not, but ministers had persuaded some that the peace was solid, though they themselves had since repeatedly declared, that from the moment of its conclusion, the conduct of the French government was but one system of aggression. In that case, therefore, they ought to have been prepared to put an end to what they now hold out as a hollow truce, at the most favourable moment, and a pretty moment they did choose. If it be true, that ever since the peace, the French government had never ceased from insult and aggression, ministers ought to have been in a state of preparation adequate to what the natural result of such a situation required; and instead of being the first year of the war, it ought to be considered, in regard of the state of preparation in which we ought to have been, as the third.—With respect to the bill itself, he could not help taking notice of the extraordinary assertions of ministers, that it was their intention from the beginning that volunteers should have liberty to resign; they thought any other system pernicious. Yet had they taken the attorney general's opinion, which declared that volunteers could not resign. This opinion was circulated with great profusion, and recommended to magistrates as the rule of their decision. Yet all this time ministers had intended to give the power of resignation, they thought the contrary principle pernicious in the highest degree, and they now say that they would have proposed to give liberty to resign if the law had refused. This surely was a contradiction; and unless they had so gravely asserted that they always intended to allow the power of resignation, he should have inferred that they approved the attorney general's opinion, and that they had, from the first, intended the law as he had declared it. He should have been inclined to believe, that the conduct of men disapproving of the opinion and of the law would,

in circulating it, have announced to the lords lieutenants, that it did not meet their intentions, that they intended to move for an alteration of the law, while in the mean time they would have instructed commanders of corps to permit resignation to take place. But nothing of this had they done, when Parliament met in November; nay, after bringing in another bill on the subject of the volunteers, no mention whatever was made of altering a law, the consequences of which are admitted to have been so pernicious to the volunteer system! Nay, since the attorney general's opinion had been given, it had actually been proposed in another House to clear up the point by law, when one of the secretaries of state declared, that that opinion was a sufficient rule for magistrates. In a word, on this point, he must have concluded from the conduct of ministers, that they fully approved the law as interpreted by the attorney general, and nothing but their grave declaration prevented him from thinking so still. As to general measures of defence, it was not his intention to follow the example of Mr. Pitt, in proposing any; and, in truth, one reason was, that the House was so little inclined to adopt his suggestions, and he was afraid that even Mr. Pitt was not likely to be more successful; unless, perhaps, there was some odour of office still about him which might have its influence. He believed, however, that Mr. Pitt had not much greater prospect of seeing his plans adopted by the ministers than he himself had. He thought it better, therefore, to stick to the bill before the House, whatever were its defects, particularly as it was now the conviction of all, except ministers themselves, that the country was not in that state of defence which, from the immense means confided to ministers, it ought to have been in. And upon the volunteer system, therefore, we were forced to place a good deal of dependence. It was rather singular, however, that after the volunteer system had existed above seven months, it should be necessary to begin to make new regulations upon attendance, silence in the ranks, &c. &c., and yet the system itself was resorted to on the ground of immediate danger. It was now said, that the danger was immediate, and if it was likely to arrive in four or five weeks, it was better to have the volunteers several times every week, than to purpose to extend the number of drills every week. But with regard to the permanence of the system, it might be proper to adopt another course. It might be necessary to give up some of the perfection which more frequent attendance would

bestow, lest the volunteers should be so harassed, that they might be induced to abandon the service altogether. As to the right of election he did not see that much was to be done. It might, as had been said, be left to the good sense of the people. But the conduct of ministers in menacing those that should not accommodate themselves to the wishes of government, was calculated to lay the foundation of much dissatisfaction. He hoped, however, that the volunteers would not be bullied out of their determination to defend the country. It was curious that ministers accused those on the opposition side of the House, of attacking the volunteers, and arrogated the merit of defending them. The fact was, however, that he and his honourable friends, said merely that the volunteers never could be rendered so good as regular troops, while ministers, who affected to defend, were they who levied fines upon the volunteers, and threatened to disband them if they insisted on what at the beginning was conceived to be their right. Mr. Fox concluded with stating, that a period would soon arrive in which it would be the duty of Parliament to enter into a general enquiry into the state of public defence, which was neither adequate to the means with which ministers had been entrusted, nor to what our situation required.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he should trouble the House, at that late period of the night, with a very few observations. The comparison made by his noble friend, respecting the noble lord at the head of the admiralty, was only between the first year of the late, and the first year of the present war, between the amount of the naval force in 1793 and 1803, and no farther. At the commencement of the present war, we had raised 40,000 seamen. As to marines, there were difficulties in raising them, that grew out of the means adopted for the defence of the kingdom. He admitted that species of force had gone on with langour, and that no landsmen had been raised. The number of sailors were therefore unusually great, and of landsmen unusually small, but notwithstanding these difficulties, he contended the exertions of the present were equal to those of former boards of admiralty; and if they were equal to those of the board of admiralty, in the last war, he should ask no other praise for them.—With respect to the right of resignation by volunteers, he denied that he had ever said, that it did not attach to them. Had he been asked the question, he should have said, that the fact was, the question had never occurred to him; if it had, he should have said the right of resignation was the

very essence of the volunteer system. The hon. gent. (Mr. Fox) had adverted to the silence of ministers upon the subject at the beginning of the session: but by doing so, he did not seem to be aware, that a bill relating to volunteers had been introduced, and underwent very much discussion. He was astonished, therefore, that those who expressed so much anxiety now, had not availed themselves of the opportunity of such bill, to have had the point settled. The object of the bill to which he alluded, was to relieve those who were deprived of the exemptions, which they merited, on account of some informality, or circumstance, which attached no blame to them; such as their not being exercised with arms, not being in possession of any, &c. Those gentlemen, therefore, who did not upon that occasion press for an explanation of the point in question, were accomplices with the government, of whose omission they complained. He said, that the state of the country was such as it ought to be, and wished the charge of insufficiency or neglect should be made specifically, as he should be happy to join issue, and meet it fairly. Ministers, he admitted, were incapable, if they had not made every disposition for defence, to which their means were adequate, and which were honourable to the public feeling and spirit. He acknowledged this, but he hoped, at the same time, that they had not the demerit of having failed in carrying into effect all those means which had been placed in their hands. None but those who had a propensity to view with disfavour the conduct of government, would be of a contrary opinion. Our regular force spread over the world, considerably exceeded that of any former period, and our effective force was not more than 17,000 men less than at the highest amount during the late war. The objections made to the bill were few, and ministers were ready to listen to any suggestions to improve it, and obviate that few. The hon. gent. did him an injustice to suppose that his suggestions would not be attended to. This was an æra when all should lend their hand in support of the country. He assured the hon. gent. therefore, that he should pay every attention to his advice. He should give, however, no immediate opinion upon any suggestions that had been made. He hoped the bill would be committed on Wednesday, and in the mean time he should consider them with the utmost attention. He hoped there would be no objection to going into the committee on Wednesday, and that the bill should pass through all its stages in the present week; it

was necessary that a bill of such importance to the country should be no longer delayed.

Mr. *Dent* hoped, that some better information would have been given on the exertions of the admiralty, than Steel's Monthly Navy List.

Mr. *Grey* hoped, that when the House should come to estimate the sufficiency or insufficiency of the measures adopted for the defence of the country, they should not be told to look to a comparison of the present with this or that year, but to the means in the hands of his Majesty's ministers. He was surprised to hear the right hon. gent. rest the defence of the board of admiralty upon the former of these two grounds; and he thought he gave a proof of his candour, when he asserted that the board of admiralty ought to be tried by the state of the country compared with the means in possession of government, and not by any other rule. The right hon. gent. had apologised for our naval force being lower than it ought to have been on account of there being few landmen. He feared, therefore, that the volunteer system was defective, as interfering with our naval defence, which was of paramount importance to the country. Upon the subject of the attorney general's opinion, the right hon. gent. had asked what would have been said of ministers should they have concealed it? To this he should simply answer, that there was no occasion to suffer that opinion to be acted upon to the great hardship and inconvenience of innocent individuals. If ministers thought it wrong, as they now confessed, instead of circulating, they should have remedied. They had an opportunity to do so, for upon the occasion of the bill alluded to, he said it was easy for them to have added a clause to remove that which they now acknowledge to have been a hardship, and contrary to the idea of what the law ought to be. He should not, however, at that late hour, go at length into the question. He hoped, however, that a serious inquiry would be made into the state of our preparations for defence. We had been nearly 12 months at war, but that was not the whole time that must be fairly allowed for preparation. It was admitted that the period that preceded it, was only a suspicious truce, and consequently requiring means and precautions for the safety of the country. Upon such inquiry he feared our situation, though it might not afford ground for serious alarm and apprehension, would not be found of that strength and security which we had a right to expect.

Captain *Markham* said, he had heard only

general assertions against the admiralty, but no specific charges. He should be happy to meet any precise charges, and to go into a real inquiry whenever it was thought proper. The low rate of insurance, he thought was the best proof that the admiralty had done its duty.—The bill was then read a second time, and committed for Wednesday.

[*IRISH INSURRECTION.*]—Sir *John Wrottesley* rose to give notice, that he should, on Wednesday se'nnight, move for the production of papers respecting the conduct of the Irish government in the late rebellion in that country. Having waived his former notice, it became necessary for him now to renew it.—The other orders of the day were then read and disposed of.—Adjourned at four o'clock on Tuesday morning.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, February 28.

Counsel was heard in continuation relative to the Irish appeal, *Garde v. Burton*, viz. *M. Romilly*, second counsel for the appellant, and the Solicitor General, as leading counsel on the part of the respondent. After which their lordships postponed the further consideration of the case till to-morrow.—The Earl of Londonderry, was sworn and took his seat.—The London Port Bill was brought up from the Commons and read a first time.—The Duke of York's Estate Bill, and a few private bills were presented, and these were severally read a first time.—The bills upon the table were forwarded in their respective stages.—Adjourned till to-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, February 28.

This day was appointed for two ballots for committees, to try the merits of petitions complaining of undue elections for London and Coventry, but there being only 83 members present at 4 o'clock, an adjournment of course took place till to-morrow.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Wednesday, February 29.

[*MINUTES.*]—Counsel were further heard relative to the Irish appeal, *Garde v. Burton*, namely, Mr. Solicitor General in continuation, and Mr. Richards on behalf of the Respondent.—The further consideration of the case was then adjourned till to-morrow.—The 29th report of the Commissioners of Accounts in Ireland, was pre-

sented by a person from the Irish Secretary of State's Office, and ordered to lie on the table.

[*IRISH PENSIONS AND SALARIES.*]—Lord King rose to call the attention of the House to a circumstance which he deemed of great importance, and well worthy the notice of Parliament. He alluded to the practice which prevailed of paying certain officers under the government of Ireland their salaries at par in this part of the United Kingdom; of this he spoke in terms of disapprobation, principally as an application of a part of the revenues of Ireland, without the sanction or concurrence of Parliament. He adverted to the very unfavourable state of the exchange against Ireland, which was an additional reason for the proceeding in question being a proper subject of investigation. He also alluded to the bill for continuing the restriction upon the Bank of Ireland then before the other House of Parliament, and intimated, that as he felt it his duty to call the attention of their lordships to that subject, he expressed his hope that it would not be hurried in its progress through that House. The noble lord concluded by moving, that an account be laid before the House of all persons and salaries chargeable on the revenues of Ireland, and paid at par in this country.

The *Earl of Limerick* shortly expressed his difference in opinion from the noble lord on the subject, and stated, that when the account moved for should come before the House, he had no doubt of being able satisfactorily to justify the proceeding in question to their lordships.

The *Earl of Suffolk* took the opportunity to express his surprise, that accounts, which he had moved for so long since as two years, should not be yet laid before the House. He alluded to the accounts of the proceeds of old naval stores, the amount of which, in all probability, was very considerable, and the disposition thereof, he contended it was proper it should be known to Parliament.

Lord *Hawkesbury* expressed his readiness to afford every practicable explanation on the topic touched upon by the noble earl, but he was then uninformed upon the subject; not having had the honour of a seat in that House at the remote period mentioned, he could not tell what steps had been taken in consequence of the noble earl's motion.

The *Earl of Suffolk* shortly explained, and observed, that there was another noble Secretary of State present with respect

to whom such an excuse could not be offered.

Lord *Hobart* observed, that the topic alluded to, had been rather inopportunately mentioned, as the question regularly before the House related to certain salaries and pensions chargeable on the revenues of Ireland; this their lordships must all see, had nothing to do with the proceeds of old naval stores. However, with respect to the desired explanation, he had to remark, 1st, that the accounts in question had no connexion with his department, and 2dly, that if the application had been made directly to himself, he could only say, that he should cause inquiries to be made on the subject.—The question upon Lord King's motion was then put, and it was ordered accordingly.—The various bills before the House were then forwarded in their respective stages, after which their lordships adjourned till to-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,
Wednesday, February 29.

[MINUTES.]—The House proceeded to ballot for two Committees, to try the merits of petitions complaining of undue elections for London and Coventry, in the former of which only they succeeded.—Sir G. Cornwall reported from the Committee appointed to try and determine the merits of the petition complaining of an undue election for Aylesbury, that Mr. Dupre was duly elected, that Mr. Bent was not duly elected, that the petitioner Mr. Freemantle was not duly elected, that the election, as far as related to Mr. Bent, was void, and the petitions were not frivolous and vexatious. He further reported, that such a system of bribery and corruption had been practised at the last election, that the Committee thought it incumbent upon them to submit it to the consideration of the House, in order that they might institute such proceedings as it might think proper.—The latter report was then read by the clerk, and on the motion of Sir George Cornwall, ordered to be taken into consideration on next Monday fortnight, and to be printed. Sir George Cornwall then moved that the Minutes of evidence taken before the Committee should be laid upon the table. Ordered.—He also moved that the Speaker should not issue any warrant for a new writ for Aylesbury until the report should have been taken into consideration. Ordered.—An account was ordered to be presented of the amount of interest received in Great Britain on loans raised for Ireland, for 8

years.—Mr. Howard brought up the report of the Committee relative to the proposed canal from Croydon to Portsmouth, which was read and agreed to, and a bill ordered.—Lord G. L. Gower presented a petition from the maltsters and barley-growers of Tamworth and its neighbourhood, in Staffordshire, complaining of the heavy duty on malt, and praying relief which was ordered to lie on the table.

[PERMANENT TAXES.]—Mr. *Johnstone* rose for the purpose of obtaining for the House such information as he conceived was absolutely necessary for understanding that which his Majesty's ministers called an Account of the permanent taxes for the last year. The hon. member, after giving a short detail of the errors which he thought were to be found in the papers which lay on the table, concluded by moving for accounts of the produce of the permanent revenue, for the years ending the 5th of January, 1802, 1803, and 1804, distinguishing the new taxes imposed each year, and the produce of them each quarter.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that he did not see any possible objection to indulge the hon. gent. or any other member who wished it, with such accounts as were now moved for; he hoped, however, that although he did not now think it necessary to make any observations on the hon. member's observations, it would not be supposed, on that account, that he at all meant to accede to the accuracy of them.

Mr. *Vansittart* made some observations on the subject, similar to those which had been made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer; he, however, saw no reason for withholding the said accounts.—The accounts were then ordered.

[BARRACKS.]—Admiral *Berkeley* adverted to an estimate upon the table relative to the expense of Barracks, which he said was not calculated to afford any information to the House, with respect to what was more materially wanted. In order therefore, to obtain that information, he moved for an account of all barracks pulled down, sold or disposed of, with the number of men and horses they were capable of containing, since the ratification of the Treaty of Amiens, with the terms they were sold for. 2dly, An Account of all barracks erected, or ordered to be erected, since the same period, the places where situated, and the number of men and horses they were capable of containing, together with the dates of the orders for such erections. 3dly, An Account of the expense of erecting all such barracks, distin-

guishing whether built by contract, engagement, or otherwise, together with the dates of such contracts or agreements. 4thly, an Account of the terms of all such contracts or agreements, and the names of the persons contracted with.

The *Secretary at War* said, there was no objection on the part of government to give every information relative to the Barrack Department. With respect to the estimates complained of, the hon. admiral would find that it was rather more particular in its detail than those estimates had been on former occasions. As to the third motion of the hon. admiral, relative to the expenses of erecting barracks, the account could not at present be made up, because the several accounts were now in a state of liquidation. — The accounts moved for were then ordered, with a trifling transposition of words.

[IRISH SALARIES.] — Lord *A. Hamilton* gave notice of his intention to move tomorrow for an account of the sums paid in this country at par, to the officers of the Irish government.

Mr. *Corry* said, he should have no objection to the motion. He then adverted to an order which had dropped, in consequence of a sufficient number of members not attending on the preceding day to go to business, for a Committee on the acts relating to the Irish revenue. He would not attempt to pronounce whether it would be consistent with the proceedings of the House to take up the order of this day, but that there might be no doubt upon the subject, he wished to postpone it, trusting, however, that there would be no objection to his then moving, that the house should to-morrow resolve itself into a Committee upon these acts. — The motion was agreed to.

[IRISH BANK RESTRICTION BILL.] — Mr. *Elliot* called the attention of the House to the circumstance of the Irish Bank Restriction Bill, which had passed that House ten days since, and which had not, he understood, been yet carried to the Lords.

Mr. *Alexander* said, that the delay had originated in a mistake.

[PROPERTY TAX.] — Mr. *Dent* asked, whether it was intended to bring in any bill to explain the Property Tax Act.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he was not aware of any measure relating to the Property Tax being intended to be brought forward before the Easter recess, except a bill to extend the time for hearing appeals.

Mr. *Dent* made some other observations, but in so low a tone of voice that we could not distinctly hear them: we understood them to relate to the liability of bankers to penalties under the bill as it at present stood.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* admitted the liability of the bankers, but observed, that no such penalties could be recoverable previous to the 5th of April, and it was under the consideration of government whether it would be most advisable to bring in an explanatory bill in the first instance, or to constitute a process for the recovery of such penalties, and then by a bill to stay proceedings. The House, therefore, would doubtless be of opinion, that no such penalties ought to be levied.

[VOLUNTEER CONSOLIDATION BILL.] — Mr. *Secretary Yorke* moved the order of the day for the House to resolve itself into a Committee on the Volunteer Bill. He expressed an opinion that as there were several amendments to make, and several clauses to bring up, it would be most advisable to go through those amendments and clauses, in order that the whole might be printed, and debate the principle, if it was thought necessary, on the report. — On the question being put for the Speaker's leaving the chair,

Mr. *Francis* said, I rise, Sir, not so much with an intention to oppose your leaving the chair, as to delay it. We have time enough to discuss the provisions of this bill, even if they were, what I do not think they are, very material or very urgent. Other objects, infinitely more important and more pressing, seem to me to demand a previous consideration. They are not unconnected with the general purpose of the bill. On the contrary, they are essentially connected with it. A measure of national defence is brought before us. To know whether it is judiciously contrived, and likely to answer the purpose it professes, you must consider what your danger is; to understand your danger, you must look at the situation of the country in all its circumstances and relations. This is not a mere question of military defence against a foreign foe, but whether our situation, on the whole, constitutes a state of national security, or extreme peril? I speak with greater anxiety and concern on my mind than I ever experienced in this House, because I seriously feel the truth of what others say, without feeling it so deeply as they ought to do. At least it so appears to me to be too much the habit of this House, and indeed of the public. We talk of our danger in very proper terms; that it is imminent; that the crisis

is awful, terrible, and tremendous. Gentlemen use these phrases till they are hack-nied and make no impression. We are not deficient in strong expressions about the case, but we are extremely cautious about what we say of the causes and the authors; as if all our duties were comprised in the personal prudence of not giving offence. Take care how you offend this or that great person; be guarded in your terms; be delicate in your allusions. And this they say at the approach of the greatest hazard, and with the prospect of the greatest calamities to the nation. I am not at all disposed to follow these prudential maxims. I will not make an apology or look out for a shelter for doing that which I think an essential duty, and which the present moment imperiously demands of me. This insignificant bill may wait till other topics are discussed. Not that I mean to go far into the discussion of them; but rather to suggest them to the consideration of some gentlemen who are better qualified, and have more authority to enforce them. In order to make an effectual provision for what is to come, we must look back to what is past. You might as well say that you may have wisdom without experience, as to talk of remedies against an existing or an impending mischief, without reverting to the false steps which have brought you into it. I do not mean to argue now about the justice or injustice of the war, but shortly to compare the conduct and the progress of it, with the principle which it originally assumed, and the character it sat out with. In going to war for the preservation of a rock in the Mediterranean, of which we were in possession, we asserted a high station in the society of nations; we took the most eminent ground of national dignity, elevated pretensions, foreign dominion, and possibly of laudable ambition. No man thought or said that it was a war of domestic security, or for the mere defence of the two islands. What followed? This war of dignity and ambition had not been three months old, before a plan was delivered out by authority for defending the capital by lines of circumvallation! A more unmilitary idea, or more universally reprobated by all the great military authorities, did never enter into the mind of a rational government. But I do not now arraign it in that sense. I compare it with the high pretensions of the war, and then I say that a more degrading act of national humiliation in the eyes of all Europe, cannot be imagined. What have we been doing ever since? Why, Sir, it is said that we have provided for the security

of Great Britain and Ireland. Whether we have done so or not remains to be tried. But granting the fact, to what does it amount to, but that with a garrison of near 600,000 men in arms, we are able to defend the two islands? There is our glory and there it ends. The war then on our side, is purely and strictly defensive, and in all appearance it never can be any thing else. But what is a defensive war? What is a war in which you cannot offend your enemy? in which you must perpetually wait and watch his motions, and be perfectly satisfied if you can parry his attacks? This was not the principle on which that wise personage Queen Elizabeth acted in parallel circumstances. Her language was, that "having advised with herself, she was resolved either to make war or peace, for *via di mezzo* was very unsafe: and besides a course of continual charge and continued fear; and to stand only on the defensive was to live at the discretion of her enemies." Such was her wisdom, or such were the counsels of the great men who advised her; of Raleigh, of Walsingham, of Burleigh, whose characters, I presume, will not suffer much by comparison with that of the gent. opposite to me. But after all, have we fully provided even for our defence? That we have sufficient physical force, I do not dispute. But have we the directing mind? Another view of our state is indeed most melancholy, and open to the most distressing consequences. Does any man in the House know with certainty, or can he assert with confidence, that at this moment, when all the faculties of the country are most wanted, the constitution is in real and practical possession of its executive power? The explanations given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, have thrown no light on that question. All we could collect from him was, that he was better informed than other persons who ought to have known best.—His Majesty's Secretary of State has declared, that strict faith must be kept with the several corps of volunteers, according to the terms of their respective compacts with government; and that, if any of them should persist in claiming a right to choose their officers, on which their engagements were offered and accepted, he shall hold himself bound to advise his Majesty to discontinue their service. In the first place, Sir, I do not think that it is keeping faith with them. They have put themselves to great trouble and considerable expense, and many personal sacrifices for the public service; and now, if they do not submit to a new condition, which ought to have been stated to them in the first instance,

if they do not surrender a right or a claim, which they thought had been acknowledged, they are to be invidiously turned adrift, as if they had deserted the defence of their country in its utmost danger. I am sure they will not do so, but it is their own virtue and not the wisdom of government, that will prevent it. In my mind, Sir, their claim is inherent in the nature of the service they have engaged in. In this respect there is an essential difference between a voluntary and a mercenary army. I mean nothing invidious by that word. No man can respect and honour our regular army more than I do. In an army raised by the crown, and paid by the public, the appointment of the officers must be in the executive power, and can be no where else. The men who compose it, are unknown to one another until they are brought together; and could never agree in choosing their officers, even if the choice was left to their discretion. But the principle on which a voluntary army agreed to unite and act, is that they previously know and depend upon each other. Their officers are their neighbours or acquaintances, and their colonel probably a man of the greatest rank and fortune, and most respected in the county. If this be wrong, it is a defect in the system, but I think it belongs to it. But, Sir, in what circumstances is it that his Majesty's ministers are so very ready to disband any part of that force, in which, hitherto, they have professed to rely for the public defence? It is at the same moment when we hear it from them, and have it under the hand of the Secretary of State, "that an immediate and formidable attack upon our independence and existence, as a nation, is threatened by a powerful and implacable enemy."—Surely, Sir, these considerations deserve the attention of the greatest abilities, and of the most eminent persons in this House. To watch the conduct of government, to take care of the public safety is, at all times, their special duty; but particularly now, when, unfortunately for the country, they have no other duty to perform.

Colonel Craufurd.—I rise, Sir, for the purpose of decidedly opposing the motion for your leaving the chair. When I consider the magnitude and importance of the subject to which this bill relates, and the insignificance of the bill itself; when I consider, I say, the magnitude and importance of this subject, as immediately embracing the whole system of the irregular force of the country, and not remotely but very materially affecting our regular army, I do feel that upon such a subject (so great in itself, so exten-

sive in its consequences) to come to such a conclusion as the adoption of this bill or of any thing that can be wellengrafted upon it in the committee, would be a most serious misfortune.—For if, Sir, we were to adopt this bill, our passing it would, I fear, be considered by the country, I am sure, would be construed by his Majesty's ministers, as a parliamentary approbation of that system upon which they have thought proper to rest the defence of this empire, against the most formidable attack that ever was prepared against it.—And when I contemplate the nature of that attack, the immense numbers and the excellence of the army by which it is to be made, their inveterate hostility to us and the consequent enthusiasm with which they will embark in this enterprise, the uncontrolled power and extraordinary talents of the man by whom they are conducted;—when, on the other hand, I take a view of the immense powers which this country possesses, and consider how, by the false measures of the ministers, these powers have been, I will not say misapplied, but actually shackled, repressed, and deprived of half their energy and action; when I consider all this, Sir, I feel myself bound by the most sacred duty to endeavour to prevent our proceeding any further upon such a system, and shall therefore, propose, that instead of going into a committee upon this insignificant bill, we should rather appoint a day for taking a more enlarged and general view of the military system of the country.—Sir, when I speak of the formidable nature of the attack that is preparing against us, and express my opinion that our defensive measures are defective and insignificant, I beg I may not be understood to think that there is a danger of the country being absolutely subdued by the enemy. A zealous but rather an indiscreet friend of his Majesty's ministers, has said in their praise, that under them the nation governs itself; and so I trust, Sir, that notwithstanding their mismanagement the nation will at least defend itself against ultimate subjugation.—That event I will put out of the question.—But it is enough for us to know that this empire is not in danger of becoming a province of France, would it not be in the highest degree disgraceful and unworthy of Britons to rest satisfied with the assurance that we shall not be entirely conquered by that enemy, with whom we and our ancestors have so often and so gloriously contended? I do not say, Sir, that we ought not for a time to stand on the defensive: but our defensive should be of such a sort as would enable us not only ultimately to repel an invading enemy after a long and distress-

ing contest, but almost instantly to annihilate or drive back into the sea, the army which should have been rash enough to set its foot upon our shores.—Such is not our present situation: but it might have been such, if the ministers had made a proper use of the time that has elapsed since we were warned of the attack which is now, perhaps, near at hand. In order to repair, as much as possible, the effects of the measures which they have pursued, would require a much more complete revision and amendment, of them than any thing which can be engrafted on the present bill; and, therefore, it is that I oppose our going into a committee upon it.—If his Majesty's ministers in framing this bill had aimed at something great, even although they should have so bungled in the execution as to render it inadequate to the attainment of their object, still, Sir, I should have entertained good hope (founded upon my own parliamentary experience) that, in its progress through the House the bill might have been so improved and corrected, as to have become a great and useful measure. These hopes, I say, would have been founded upon my own parliamentary experience, because I do recollect, that the bill which they introduced last session, for the purpose of enabling his Majesty to call upon great portion of the people to join in the defence of the empire against an attack which even then, was thought to be near at hand, was drawn up in such a manner, that had it gone out of the House as it came into it, the whole of the volunteer force would to this very hour have received only one day's drilling. The object that was aimed at by those with whom the idea of that bill originated was, certainly a great one; but it was very generally reported, and I believe upon good grounds, that it did *not* originate with his Majesty's ministers. I have reason to believe, Sir, that the great outline of it was suggested to them by a right hon. gent. (Mr. Pitt) whom I am grieved to see in a private station at a time when the country stands so much in need of the aid of all those most distinguished for their abilities.—Yet although his Majesty's ministers had contrived to fill up the outline that was given them in so unskilful a manner, yet the bill in the course of its progress through the House, received such corrections and improvements as would have rendered it a great and powerful weapon, if it had been put into the hands of a government that was capable of wielding it.—But, Sir, the outline of the present bill is so confined, that there is no room to work in; the basis is so narrow, that nothing great can be founded upon it; as

well might one attempt to erect a palace on the site of a cottage, or to build a line of battle ship on the keel of a jolly boat or wherry.—I say, Sir, if we would effect any thing great, we must not proceed upon this insignificant bill, but must come to a complete revision of our whole military system. Let it not, however, be supposed, that I would recommend, at this moment, to undo any thing that has been done, with a view to any future and distant improvement. I certainly would not make any retrograde step; for although we have long been kept in a state of constant expectation of invasion, yet I do think, that the period has now arrived when that event may certainly be supposed to be near at hand; both because the enemy has had full time to make his preparations, and because at this season of the year the easterly winds most commonly prevail. What I would propose, therefore, is to pass as quickly as possible from a bad system to a good one, not (as I said before) by abruptly undoing what has been done but by improving what is faulty, and adding what is deficient.—This being the principle upon which I would proceed, it becomes impossible for me to defer expressing my opinions until we go into a committee upon the bill; and I am the more inclined, Sir, to take it up in the present stage, because I confess that something, which lately fell from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, made me wish to seize the earliest opportunity of again commencing upon the measures which have been adopted for the defence of the country.—Upon that occasion, Sir, (I mean the second reading of this bill) the Chancellor of the Exchequer threw down the gauntlet, and challenged the House to prove that he and his colleagues had not done every thing that could have been done to provide for the safety or call forth the strength of the empire. I take up the gauntlet: I accept the challenge; I desire, that a day may be fixed for the investigation; and I pledge myself to prove, that since the commencement of the war, our affairs have been grossly mismanaged.—I cannot, indeed, on the present occasion, go so much at large into the discussion as I shall be enabled to do on the day which will, I hope, be appointed for that investigation which they challenge, and I desire; but I shall seize this opportunity of taking a general view of the subject. I hope I shall not detain the House very long: but I do not think it necessary to offer any apology for delaying (if I cannot prevent) your leaving the chair, because I do not conceive it possible that the House should feel impatient to go into a committee upon *such* a bill

as this.—I shall begin, Sir, with that which presents itself to most men's minds as the first and most important part of the public force, I mean the navy. Upon this I shall only say a very few words.—It certainly is not my intention to bring any direct charge against the Admiralty for this plain reason, that I am not at present possessed of sufficiently accurate information upon which to ground it; but, Sir, I cannot sufficiently express my astonishment at the two and only modes of defence which have lately been resorted to in this House, when the conduct of that department has been called in question.—The one is by a comparison of our present naval establishment with that which has been kept up and found to be sufficient in former wars. But this species of defence, Sir, is good for nothing, unless it can be proved that the present situation of this country with respect to the enemy, is similar to our situation in the periods referred to.—Now I will not enter into any reasoning to prove that no such similarity exists, and that the attack with which we now are menaced is, beyond all sort of comparison, more formidable than any that we were formerly threatened with; because I feel that it would be an insult to the House to take up their time in proving that which must be evident to every man of common sense.—This species of defence, by comparison, is therefore, I say, good for nothing; and really Sir, it does appear to me that the other which was set up by a lord of the Admiralty, is equally absurd.—We are told that the low rate of insurance is a proof of the sufficiency of the exertions made in the administration of the naval department. The low rate of insurance certainly proves, that few of our ships are taken; but what is that owing to? Why, Sir, it is in a great measure owing to this, that the enemy does not attempt to take them. He does not think it worth his while to be nibbling at the fruits of our industry, when he is preparing to strike at the very root of it, and to dry up the source from which all our commerce flows. The French government not only does not encourage the fitting out of privateers, but absolutely forbids it; and it is collecting all the seamen that can be procured either in France or the neighbouring countries for the purpose of preparing that grand explosion by which they hope to overwhelm us. This mode of defending the conduct of the Admiralty is, therefore as little to the purpose as the other; nor can they satisfy the doubts which are pretty generally entertained in any other way than by showing, either that they have done

all that was possible to be done, or that they have done as much as the exigency of the times requires. I have said that I do not mean to bring any direct charge against the Admiralty; but I certainly have heard enough to make me wish that the subject may soon be brought regularly before the House by a right hon. gent. (Mr. Pitt) who lately announced an intention of doing so.—I have heard, for instance, from such authority as leaves me no doubt of the fact, that on a part of the coast which is perhaps more than any other, exposed to the attack of the enemy's flotilla, many vessels perfectly calculated for opposing such a force, well manned and belonging to persons extremely willing to prepare them for that service, did not receive their guns till some time after Christmas. And as this happened in a situation than which none perhaps is more favourable for the enemy's purpose, it may be doubted whether in other places we are even now prepared as we ought to be.—Having said these few words respecting the navy, because the subject had been introduced by others in discussing this measure, I shall now proceed to consider the system of our land force; and although I shall chiefly direct my attention to that part of it to which this bill more immediately relates, yet I shall think it right to make a few observations respecting the other branches of the service.—And here, Sir, it will be necessary to consider the means which the ministers possessed at the commencement of the war.—This House gave repeated proofs not only of its willingness but anxiety to furnish them with all the powers of every kind which might enable them to call forth the strength of the country, and the whole body of the people when called upon, displayed an unexampled degree of patriotism and zeal; in short all the means possessed by this country were completely at their disposal. Now let us see how they have applied these means in the different branches of the military service.—In the first place, with respect to the army, we had, Sir, when the war broke out, an army not so strong as it ought to have been in point of numbers, but strong, indeed, in all those excellent qualities which constitute the very soul of an army. It was strong, I say, in a truly military spirit, in an excellent and firmly established discipline, in considerable experience acquired in the course of the war, and above all, Sir, it was strong in a consciousness of its prowess, so recently evinced in the glorious exploits which a part of it had achieved on the plains of Egypt.—I may speak my opinion of that campaign the more freely, because I had no share in it;

and when I consider all the difficulties that our troops had to contend with, I do sincerely think, that in the whole course of the late war, in which so many brilliant actions were performed by all the armies that were engaged in it, nothing was done either by the French or allies equal to the achievements of the English in Egypt.—The happy effect which these victories naturally produced on the minds of the army, was not confined to those brave men by whom they were gained. Every British soldier sympathized with them; every regiment in the service felt an increased confidence in its powers; and when marching against the enemy would be electrified by the sound of Alexandria. With such an army on the one hand, (not, indeed, so numerous as it ought to have been, but equal to any in Europe in all those incorporeal excellencies which constitute the soul of an army, and with a great population on the other, (brave as our countrymen have always shewn themselves, but glowing, upon this occasion, with a more than ordinary degree of patriotic zeal) it is obvious that all the measures of the government ought to have been so calculated as to infuse the spirit of the one, into as large a mass of the other, as it was capable of animating.—I shall not here enter into the examination of the means which were or might have been used to raise men; but shall consider only the use that has been made of them when raised; which has, in my opinion, been extremely erroneous.—The first thing that ought to have been done was to augment every one of the existing regiments to as great a number of men as they could contain without becoming unmanageable; both because recruits engrafted upon an old regiment will much sooner become fit for service than if formed into new corps; and also, because in the former case they will soon be inspired, not only with the *general* spirit of the army, but also with that *particular* pride and esprit de corps which exists in each old regiment, and is founded upon the recollection of its former services.—And when I compare the establishment of officers in our regiments with that of any other army in Europe, I think I have good reason for saying, that with a small increase of those below the rank of field officers, the regiments might have been augmented to 12 or 1400 men each, and that with some interior arrangements, which it is unnecessary to enter into here, they would not have been unwieldy.—Had ministers pursued this system in the augmentation of the army, instead of raising thirty six new battalions, the new levies might soon have been made equal to

the old stock, and we should still have had a great number of good officers remaining to be employed in forming the *Reserve*, which I shall presently mention, as well as in instructing the *Irregulars*.—I now, Sir, come to mention a description of force for which no provision whatever has been made, I mean a *real Reserve*, destined to join the regiments in the event of actual invasion; by means of which the losses sustained in the first actions would be immediately repaired, and the strength of the army would be constantly increasing, or at least remain undiminished, even during the course of the most severe operations.—The *Reserve* which I have in contemplation might have been formed in such a manner as to interfere very little indeed with the ordinary avocations of the people, and could not reasonably have been considered as a hardship in any point of view.—I would have taken this reserve, by ballot, from amongst the first class, that is, from those who from age and other circumstances are fittest for the military service; officers from half-pay should have been distributed through the country to instruct them; and that instruction should have been confined to the rendering them expert in loading and firing, and teaching them the *very little* else that is *absolutely necessary* to enable them to take their places in the rear ranks of the regiments when called into the field.—If the army had been augmented on the principles I have mentioned, and no more officers than were really necessary had been employed in forming the reserve, there would still have remained in the country, as applicable to the irregulars, a considerable number of men of some military experience; and without the aid of such men, I think it impossible that they should ever be able to render the services that they would otherwise be capable of.—I now, Sir, come to consider that part of our present force to which this bill immediately relates; and I must say, that the whole system of the volunteer establishment, as it now exists, appears to me to be fundamentally wrong. The manner in which it is constituted, the mode in which the expense is defrayed, the committees, the exemptions, the mode of training this force, and the use which is intended to be made of it, nay even the clothing itself, in short, all and every part of the system I do most entirely disapprove of.—In the first place, I shall take notice of the exemptions, because (as I have frequently said before) I consider these to be the greatest evil of the whole system. It is totally unnecessary for me to take up the time of the House by tracing the origin of this

evil. For I am sure that every member must be convinced, as I am, that the volunteers having become entitled to these exemptions was solely owing to the blunders of those who framed the bills. I have, indeed, on former occasions, heard one of his Majesty's ministers attempt to deny it; but they must prove to me that I have been afflicted with some malady which deprives me of the power of recollection, before they can persuade me that I am mistaken in this assertion. In the army of reserve bill no exemptions were intended to be granted, except to volunteers who had been enrolled before that measure was brought forward: in the general defence bill the only inducement held out to voluntary service was, that, in districts where a sufficient number came forward to enroll themselves, the compulsory clauses of that act should not be enforced. This, I say, was the only exemption that was intended by Parliament, or expected by those who volunteered under the defence act; and I consider it as a libel on the spirit and patriotism of the people, to say (as it has been said), that they required any further inducement.—The mischievous effects of that extraordinary blunder, by which the intentions of the legislature have been so completely counteracted, are, in my opinion, nothing less than to cripple and weaken every branch of the public force, the regular army, the army of reserve, the militia, and even the irregular or volunteer force itself; for so long as the present system is persevered in, you cannot have volunteers without exemptions from ballot, and you cannot grant exemptions to so large a proportion of the people as ought to be in arms. It is to this latter effect of the exemptions, I mean their operation in preventing your increasing the number of your irregulars, that I shall chiefly direct my observations upon the present occasion: not that I think this the most important part of our force, of that, I fancy I shall not be suspected: my partiality to one of a different description, I mean to a *regular* army, is, I believe, well known, and it did in the last sessions induce an hon. gent. whom I do not now see in the House, to give me the appellation of the *Regular Colonel*; he meant it as a joke, but I confess that I felt myself obliged to him for it; I am proud of it; I am happy to be distinguished from the colonels whom one now-a-days meets in every street of the town. I wish that all my brother officers, of the same rank in the army, were distinguished by the same appellation; I wish we were all called *regular colonels*.—It has been justly observed by a right hon. friend of mine (Mr.

Windham), that the profusion of military titles bestowed on the volunteer officers has completely deprived those of the regular army of that honourable distinction in society which they formerly enjoyed, as, perhaps, the only reward for having devoted themselves to the risks and hardships of a profession, in which they must necessarily sacrifice those advantages which are generally considered as constituting a very great portion of the comforts of life.—This is no longer the case; this gratification we no longer enjoy; for if, instead of passing my life in the army, I had pursued any other easy and lucrative profession, I might still have been a colonel; I might have been a merchant and a colonel, a banker and a colonel, a physician and a colonel, in short, any thing but a divine; and I expect that, in a short time, even the profession of a churchman will not prevent his assuming a military title.—But to return from this digression (which I hope the House will excuse), I repeat that these exemptions, exclusive of their baneful influence on other branches of our military establishment, are to be considered as a most serious evil, in as much as they prevent the increase of the irregular unembodied force.—To this, I suppose, it will be answered, what, are you so much alarmed at the enemy's preparations as to think that 400,000 volunteers in addition to the army and militia are not sufficient for our security? Why, Sir, I trust I am not more alarmed than every reasonable man ought to be; but I do confess, that in my opinion 400,000 men dispersed as they are in almost equal proportions over the whole surface of the kingdom, are not enough. When however I say this, I beg I may not be understood to mean, that even with such a force as we now have, there is any probability of our being conquered;—but I do maintain that we are not, as we might have been, in such a state of preparation as to ensure our being able to get the better of an invading enemy without the risk of previously sustaining some great disaster.—A right hon. gent. (Mr. Yorke) has told us, that not above one-fourth of the first class of the people are in the volunteer corps; now, I, Sir, should wish (as I have frequently said on former occasions) that the whole of the first class should be armed, and, in many districts, the second and third class also; that is to say, that the great mass of the able bodied active men of the country should be prepared, not to drive away their cattle or destroy their provisions, but to fight and harass the enemy. In short, Sir, I wish that, instead of a comparatively small body

of privileged volunteers, we had what has, I believe, been more than once recommended by two men of the most distinguished talents (Messrs. Windham and Fox), I mean an armed peasantry. A noble Lord (Castlereagh) has told us, on a former occasion, that we have even in our own times a striking example of the efficacy of such a force as our volunteers, when opposed to a veteran army, and I understood him to say, that we had no such examples to produce in favour of an armed peasantry. But I confess that, in my opinion, the events of modern history appear to prove exactly the reverse.—The instance quoted by the noble lord, was that of the battle of Jemappe;—but the truth is, that the French troops who gained that battle were perfectly unlike our volunteers. The greater part of them had been formed on the foundation of the old army of France; for it is a mistake to suppose that that army was dissolved by the revolution. The majority of the general officers, and many of other ranks, certainly emigrated, but not the bulk of the army. Of the artillery and engineer corps (containing the best informed officers in France) very few individuals came away: all the other regiments (with only one or two exceptions) also remained in the country; and of the regimental officers (that description, at least, who before the revolution chiefly resided with their corps) a very great proportion did not leave France.—But admitting, as I do, that great part of the troops engaged at Jemappe had not been engrafted on the regiments of the line; still, I say, they were perfectly unlike what our volunteers will be at the commencement of an invasion. They had been long embodied and in the field; and a great part of them had been engaged in a successful and, what they no doubt would consider to be, a glorious campaign: for a general of the highest reputation at the head of an army, esteemed to be at least *one* of the best in Europe, had retreated before them. It must also be recollected, that in this battle of Jemappe, of which we have heard so much, general Dumas, according to the most credible accounts, had between forty and fifty, or even it has been said, sixty thousand men, against about sixteen thousand Austrians, so that at any rate it cannot be considered as any great proof of French prowess; and if they do plume themselves upon it, I think they have little to boast of.—This example of the noble lord's does not, therefore, in my opinion, prove any thing in favour of our volunteer system; but it does so happen, Sir, that the late war affords us what I should consider as a much better test of the comparative me-

rits of the numerous armed peasantry for which I contend, as contrasted with such a force as our volunteers. I mean, Sir, that glorious example set to the world by the Vendean peasants; an example which (if Britons need look for any thing to emulate out of their own country) we should never lose sight of. The national guards, who first attacked the Vendéans, were very like our volunteers, well armed, and provided with a numerous artillery; the Vendéans, on the other hand, could scarcely be called an armed peasantry; for the fact is, that in the outset of the contest, a great proportion of them had no other means of providing themselves with fire-arms but by wresting them out of the hands of their enemies. Yet, even in this state (many of them having nothing but pitchforks), they attacked their opponents with irresistible impetuosity, took from them the whole of their artillery, and completely destroyed this army of volunteers.—Large bodies of troops of the line afterwards marched against them, but were likewise defeated. When they, on the other hand, had the worst of it, they used to disperse so rapidly, that the enemy saw nothing to pursue or strike at; and they assembled again as quickly whenever they chose to renew the combat. Now I say, Sir, with such an example of what has been done by a rude peasantry, totally without discipline, and, in the beginning, almost without arms, what might we not expect from our own, if the great mass of the physical strength of the nation was prepared to co-operate with our regular forces, instead of being excluded, as three-fourths of the stoutest and youngest men in the country now are, and disgusted (as they must be) by the exemptions which you grant to the volunteers? No nation upon earth possesses a larger share of natural courage than the English; and, if you take the proper means to call forth their exertions, they will defend their country with as much enthusiasm as was ever displayed by any other people. So confident am I of this, that whenever the invasion takes place, I should be happy to command a body of sturdy peasants, even although they were armed only with pikes; and if I did not find an opportunity of performing some action that would do honour to them and to myself, I think I should deserve to be dismissed from his Majesty's service.—And now, Sir, having said so much on the superiority of an armed peasantry over our present volunteer establishment, I think it will be as well to describe shortly, what I mean by an armed peasantry, and in what respect they would differ from the volun-

teers.—In the first place, their numbers would be three or four times as great, and would comprize the *whole* of the first class of the people, three-fourths of whom a right hon. gent. (Mr. Yorke) has told us, are not now enrolled. 2dly, their dress, if any distinction of that sort was adopted, would be much less expensive, consisting merely of a short coarse great coat, which, with their arms, a small knapsack, and a bag for their provisions, would constitute the whole expense of their equipment; and 3dly, their instruction or drilling would be simple, natural, and strictly confined to that which could be really useful to them when acting as irregulars in the field.—I should of course give fire-arms to as great a proportion of them as possible, and pikes to the rest until fire-arms could be procured.—For the purpose of teaching them the use of their arms, I certainly should prefer gamekeepers and poachers to any militia serjeants in the kingdom; for I should wish them to learn no more than just what every one is taught when he first goes a shooting. All that I would require of them is to load the piece well, and to handle it in such a manner as not to injure themselves or their neighbours but to hit their prey. Provided they could use their arms with *effect*, I would never plague them about *forms*; and whether they carried the firelock in one way or another, on the right shoulder or the left, would be to me a matter of perfect indifference. So much for the use of arms. As to manœuvres, they should be so extremely simple, that the principles of them might be taught in a very few days. Some practice would, indeed, be necessary to make them expert and ready in applying these movements to all the variety of ground; but there is a most essential difference between such a mode of employing their time and that which is now pursued; for what I recommend would be a lively, active, and amusing exercise, and exactly resembling what they would have to do upon actual service. I would teach them to take advantage of the circumstances of ground; to line a hedge in such a way as to expose themselves as little as possible to the enemy's fire; to advance rapidly to another position whenever there was an opportunity of gaining ground; to retreat with equal rapidity and line the hedges in their rear, whenever they found themselves pressed, and to condense themselves into a compact body and dash into any opening that might present itself, in the enemy's line, wherever his evident disorder and their great superiority of numbers should induce the officers who led them

to think it prudent to charge.—Such, Sir, is the armed peasantry that I would recommend instead of our present volunteers; and so far am I from agreeing with those who think that the latter possess any qualities which can at all be put in competition with the great superiority of numbers of the former, that I really think that in every point of difference, the advantage is in favour of that which I propose. Let us first take the article of dress. When objections have been made to the present cloathing of the volunteers, they have been treated with a certain degree of ridicule. For my part, I own, that the objection does not appear to me to be by any means trivial. I think it may, by degrees, have a very bad effect on the army to see a body of men so like regular soldiers in their dress, and so unlike them in their conduct. That they are unlike soldiers in their behaviour, no body can deny who will take the trouble of going on to a volunteer parade. I do not blame them for this; it is unnatural to expect it should be otherwise; and if they were not dressed like soldiers, there perhaps would not be much harm in allowing it to a certain degree, as in attempting to prevent it altogether. But a right hon. Secretary (Mr. Yorke) has told us, that it is a very good thing to have the volunteers dressed in red, because then the enemy, when he sees them at a distance, may take them for soldiers. Now, really, I think this is treating them with greater disrespect than any thing that has ever been said of them by those against whom such a clamour has been raised. The right hon. gent. seems to put them on a footing with the women in Wales, of whom it was said, that their appearance in their red cloaks, returning from market, contributed to the surrender of the French. I think that upon actual service many inconveniences may arise from their being dressed like the army. If they give way (and men of this description may often have occasion to do so) our own troops, at a distance from them, may think some regiments of the line are defeated, which may produce a bad effect on the rest; whereas, if they are dressed as they ought to be, the soldiers would know at once that the retreating body was not a part of the army, and that the line remained entire.—In the same way the general may be betrayed into some false or unnecessary movement by not being able to distinguish the one from the other. I think, too, that with respect to the effect likely to be produced on the minds of the enemy, it would be much better that they should not be dressed in military uniform. If the French should

beat a body of volunteers, they would say they had defeated the troops of the line, which would increase their confidence. If, on the other hand, they should be beat by the volunteers, their officers would easily persuade them that they had been engaged with our regulars; and they would consider it as one of the ordinary occurrences of war. But if, on the contrary, our armed peasantry, such as I propose, not dressed like soldiers, should once attack and defeat a body of the enemy, such an event would dishearten them in the greatest degree; for they then would naturally say to each other, 'see with what courage these peasants fight us; we are here engaged in a vain and endless contest against the whole body of a nation in arms.'—So much as to the dress; I now come to consider the effect of training the volunteers on the present system. In this respect, as well as in the clothing, we go upon the plan of assimilating them to the troops of the line. This is aiming at what we can never effect. We start upon a principle fundamentally erroneous. I know that in this respect I differ from a right hon. gent. (Mr. Pitt) whose talents and eloquence must always give great weight to his opinions; yet, upon a subject so immediately connected with my own profession, I cannot give up my judgment to his; and I maintain, that the regular system of tactics, according to which the volunteers are now trained, is not only not better than that simple, natural, and easy method which I would teach, but that it really is a great deal worse. It is worse, I say, not merely because it requires much more time to learn it and with the volunteers every hour that they are taken from their ordinary occupations should be considered of importance) but also because, when learnt, it is totally unlike any thing they will have to do in presence of the enemy.—I am sure it is not from prejudice that I reject it, I was formerly one of the most zealous advocates; and in a regiment which I commanded for five or six years in India, I practised it with success before it had been adopted in the rest of the army. We took it from the great King of Prussia, by whom it was introduced and brought to perfection. It was admirably calculated for the nature of the country where his armies had to act; which, consisting of extensive plains, made it necessary that large bodies of troops should be able to make great combined movements with perfect regularity and order. But the same general principle, which induced him to adopt this system, should make us reject it (I mean the principle of adapting your tactics to the ground you are to act upon), for the two countries

are totally different. — If we could suppose England reduced to that unfortunate state of being absolutely precluded from ever carrying on offensive war, in that case I should say, that we ought not to adopt the Prussian system, even for the infantry of the line: but as the latter are exposed to service in all countries, it is necessary they should know both methods; and on the plains of Egypt they certainly experienced the advantages of this solid regular system.—I do not, therefore, say, that it should be *wholly* exploded in the regular army; but I can conceive no earthly reason for applying it to a body of men, who are never to act out of this country, and who in it ought never to be used as regular troops.—The volunteers (who cannot know any thing of war) naturally expect, that what they are taught upon the field of exercise is like what they are to do upon the field of battle; and in proportion as they become expert in the one, they naturally acquire confidence in their fitness for the other. But what will be the effect produced on their minds, when the first time they see the enemy, they discover that what they have been learning is wholly impracticable, and that the confidence they had acquired in their own proficiency is ill founded? Is it not natural, I say, that this disappointment should be productive of mischievous consequences? Whether this system of tactics be practicable or not in such a country as ours, is a question which many gentlemen now present are perfectly competent to decide; because there are very many of them who have applied themselves to the duties of volunteer officers in a manner that does them the highest credit. Now I will ask any volunteer officer, any regular officer, or any other man who will reject pedantry and allow common sense to operate upon his mind; I say, I will ask him to put in his pocket the book containing an extract of general Dundas's System as now practised by the volunteers, and then to ride about the country; and with his book in his hand let him consider how it would be possible for troops to perform those manœuvres in the enclosures which cover almost the whole surface of this kingdom. — Sir, when I mention the name of general Dundas, I hope I shall not be represented as speaking slightly of that valuable officer, as I formerly have been said to do of the commander in chief, although I certainly never did any such thing. I have the highest respect for general Dundas's abilities, and I know that he has rendered the most useful services. But I never can or will allow myself, as a member of Parliament, to be deterred by any consi-

deration from delivering my opinions, when I think there is any opportunity of giving one that can be useful; and I do maintain, that what is called general Dundas's System, as now practised by the volunteers, is the very worst that could be adopted for them, and perfectly unsuited to the nature of our country. The agricultural improvements which have been so extensively encouraged all over the kingdom, the hedges and ditches with which almost every part of it is intersected, render the application of such a system absolutely impracticable.—The volunteers, however, must naturally form their ideas of war from what they are taught to practise as a preparation for war: moving, as they always do, in solid battalions, they naturally expect that when they come to fight, they will meet an enemy formed in the same manner in solid battalions like their own; and they have probably determined to charge him at once. But they will see no such thing. They will feel the enemy rather than see him. They will discover his line only by the fire that issues from it; and whilst they, in a compact body, are presenting a great mass to him which he cannot miss, he will be spread behind banks, hedges, trees, &c., taking advantage of every little circumstance of the ground in such a manner that they will scarcely see any thing to strike at; and they will be wholly at a loss how to act.—It is natural, that when men go into action for the first time, they should be in some degree embarrassed; but what must that embarrassment be, if they find (as will be the case with the volunteers), that every thing is so perfectly unlike what they have practised and been taught to expect?—I well recollect how much I was surprised, when I first saw the French, at not being able to discover those solid battalions to which my eye was accustomed, having then had no experience in war, excepting on the plains of India. I afterwards, in Ireland, had an opportunity of observing, in a trifling instance, the effect of teaching men a system not suited to the country; for, upon my ordering an officer of militia to occupy an enclosure, he drew up his men in a solid body in the middle of the field, as he had always done on the parade, instead of lining the fence; and however absurd such a mistake may appear, it is not much to be wondered at that men should do what you have taught them.—I repeat it then, that in my opinion, the present system of training is in every point of view extremely injudicious. It is attended with much unnecessary constraint; it takes up too much of their time; and is wholly unsuited to the country and

species of warfare in which they will be engaged: whereas, what I recommend is easy, natural, and is just what they will have to do when acting against the enemy. When, therefore, gentlemen, who prefer our present volunteers to an armed peasantry, ground that preference on their pretended superiority in military skill, I say they are completely mistaken. The armed peasantry, such as I propose, would be much better taught than they are for real use; besides being infinitely more numerous.—But, Sir, when I regret that one effect of the exemptions granted to the volunteers is to prevent our having an irregular armament as extensive as I should wish, the answer is that this is of no consequence, for that the want of a sufficient number of arms would prevent it even if the exemption did not.—What signifies (say they) whether the mistake in the bill produces the effect you complain of or not; for if more men were enrolled they could not be armed? So that the ministers are reduced to the dilemma of urging their neglects as an excuse for their blunders.—Upon this subject of arms, Sir, I remember that on a former occasion (the debate on the army estimates) I acknowledged that a statement made by a noble lord (Castlereagh) did appear to me to acquit the board of ordnance of any charge of neglect or want of exertion *since the commencement of the war*. But I certainly should not have said this, if the noble lord, at the same time that he told us how many arms had been issued since the commencement of hostilities, had also told us how many there were in store when war was declared. This latter statement has since been given us; and on comparing the one with the other, it appears that the number issued within the last twelve months is only 35,000 more than were then in the arsenals. I therefore retract my former concession, and again assert, that there has been great want of exertions somewhere. Perhaps the ordnance department is not to blame; they can only act in conformity to the instructions they receive from government; but if the ordnance has not been remiss, government has. To this I suppose they will answer, that I ought to make allowance for the number of arms that are now in store. In the first place, I should like to know what the number is? And then, Sir, when they say we have a great armoury in reserve, I should like to ask the hon. gentlemen whether they have also an army in reserve? And I should be glad to know what great benefit we shall derive, in case of emergency, from this great store of arms (supposing it to exist) when they have taken

no measures for procuring men who know how to make use of them? But, if from whatever cause, a sufficient quantity of fire arms cannot now be had for so extensive an armament as I propose, I do most earnestly recommend it to his Majesty's ministers to endeavour, through the influence of the general officers, and all other means in their power, to inspire the people with a confidence in the use of the pike.—I consider this to be a subject of the greatest importance; and I think, that under the present circumstances, I could hardly render a greater service to my country than by contributing to bring this weapon into fashion. You might have as many pikemen as you please in the course of a few weeks; and every man carrying, besides his pike, a spade, a hatchet or other useful implement, they would prove in every respect a most important addition to your strength. So convinced am I of this, that I will rather incur the risk of being considered tedious, than omit any opportunity of impressing it on the minds of his Majesty's ministers.—If the question was, whether you would use pikes or muskets? there could be no choice. But when it is, whether you will have the pike or nothing; whether a battalion of five or six hundred men armed with muskets, will be the stronger for the addition of an equal number of pikemen, or is as well without them? then I say, Sir, that the officer who rejects such a reinforcement as useless, must either be totally ignorant of military history, or must have a very mean opinion of the valour of his countrymen.—Sir, when we recollect what has been done by other men, without the advantage of fire arms, why should we doubt that Englishmen should do the same. I have already alluded to what was done by the Vendéans; who, disregarding the enemy's fire, used to run up to their cannon with an impetuosity which the Republicans could not resist. And do we not recollect, that in our own country, a body of undisciplined Highland peasants, throwing away what few fire arms they had, and trusting only to their broadswords, charged and completely defeated a superior body of regular troops? A similar instance, not perhaps so generally known, occurred in the year 1794, in the northern part of Bengal, when the Seiks had made an irruption in that province. Twelve battalions of our Sepoys, who are as well armed and disciplined as the Europeans, and were well provided with artillery, were attacked by a body of the Seik infantry. These, like the Highlanders, threw down their matchlocks, drew their swords, and charged the Company's

troops; and although the victory was ultimately gained by the latter, yet that part of the line against which this attack was directed was completely cut to pieces. Therefore, I ask again, why should we suppose that Englishmen could do nothing with pikes in their hands, when so much had been achieved by other men with no better weapons? Let us endeavour to rouse them to imitate that great example of heroism, given to the world by the Vendéan peasants. They had indeed, a great and noble cause to contend for; but ours is greater still. They were fighting for their king, their laws, and their religion; but we, in addition to all these powerful inducements to exertion, have also to contend for our independence as a nation, against a foreign enemy who aims at our subjugation. And although no man, I trust, is more loyally and warmly attached to his Sovereign and to the monarchy than I am; though no man has a more complete abhorrence of the French revolution than I have, yet if (which God forbid) it was decreed that our monarchy should be overthrown, I declare to God, that I would rather be the slave of an Englishman as vicious as Robespierre himself, if such a monster could be found, than of a Henry the 4th, or the best man that ever sat upon the throne of France. I say, then, that the people of this country have still greater objects to contend for than the Vendéans; and I can have no doubt of their displaying as much valour, if you put arms into their hands and take the proper means to rouse their enthusiasm.—Sir, although I have troubled the House so long, I must beg leave to say a few words upon another part of the present volunteer system, I mean the committees.—It is notorious that committees do exist; yet in this bill, which is meant as a consolidation and final adjustment of the laws respecting volunteers, no notice is taken of them whatever; an omission which I think may be attended with very bad consequences. But although there is nothing relating to them in the bill, yet in the speech of the right hon. Secretary of State in opening the business, we had an opportunity of knowing his sentiments; and I confess I was never more surprised than when I heard them. The right hon. gent. has said, that so long as the committees confine themselves to the financial concerns, there would be no harm in allowing them to continue; but that if they should ever abuse this indulgence, if in any corps it should be found that the committee should interfere improperly, and extend their deliberations to subjects which it would be dangerous to allow them to discuss, he would do—what?

Why, recommend it to his Majesty to dismiss a corps which should persevere in such improper conduct! Now, really, this is the most extraordinary code for the management of an armed force that I ever yet heard of; if it does wrong, you have no remedy but to disband it!—But, Sir, if you allow these committees to exist for one purpose, it is impossible for any man to say that they will not, by degrees, be led astray from the object for which they were originally instituted: and, therefore, if, in the present system, they are necessary for managing the finances of the corps, this is a strong additional reason for adopting what was on a former night recommended by an hon. gent. (Mr. Whitbread). Let government defray the whole expense of the volunteer corps. The tax will be less onerous than it is now, because it will be more equally levied. The expense will be less, because the corps will be restrained by the regulations of government within the bounds of economy, instead of being allowed to vie with each other in the splendour and magnificence of their appearance; and besides these great advantages, you will at the same time get rid of all plea for committees. I say, do away the necessity of committees, and declare them to be illegal. No, says the right hon. gent.—we will make no law to prevent their assembling, nor to restrain their proceedings; but if they should deviate from what we think right, we will punish them. Now, I ask, Sir, is it the conduct of wise legislators to say, we will not guard the people against committing a crime, we will not even declare it to be a crime, we will allow them to be exposed to the temptation of committing it, and then if they should transgress, we will punish them? And then, what a strange mode of punishment is it, that the right hon. Secretary means to inflict! He says he will dismiss them: but under such circumstances it might happen, that it would not be either very easy or very convenient to do so. I do not wish to put an extreme case, I am only stating the same case which the right hon. gent. himself has supposed to exist. I know that the volunteers are as loyal as they are brave and patriotic; but if such a body of armed men be allowed to hold committees, and to exercise deliberative powers, it is impossible for any man to say to what length they may, by degrees, be carried. The right hon. Secretary has supposed the case of a corps abusing this power. Now, if this happens in one corps it may equally happen in all the others, and if ever it should happen, it would probably proceed from a spirit very different from that by which they now are actuated.

In such a case the disarming them might be attended with much inconvenience.—But even in a case where the evil had not spread so far; yet the necessity of dismissing several corps might happen at a time when you could not well dispense with their services; and although I have heard it said in a former debate, that if a corps was dismissed, the members of it would enroll themselves in another, yet I must say, that it appears to me to be extremely improbable that this would be the conduct of men who had been dismissed in disgrace. At present we are far from the danger of any such inconveniences being felt; but we ought to guard against them by putting an end at once to this dangerous practice of armed men holding committees.—But there exists another practice, even still more dangerous than the committees, and which is equally unnoticed in this bill; I mean general assemblies of whole corps. It is a matter of notoriety, that in this town there are corps of upwards of 1,000 men each, in which, upon certain occasions, a general meeting is called for the purpose of discussion.—Now, if this is allowed to go on, who will pretend to say what these discussions will be confined to? Who will say that we shall not, at some future period, have as many armed Parliaments as there are volunteer corps, meeting to discuss the affairs of the state.—All these meetings, both of whole corps and of committees ought to be declared at once to be absolutely illegal.—There is only one other topic, Sir, upon which, before I conclude, I wish to say a few words. It is not, indeed, immediately connected with the present question, but having been introduced in a former debate upon this bill, I hope I shall not be deemed irregular in adverting to it.—It is a topic, the importance of which, I have frequently attempted to impress upon the minds of his Majesty's ministers; and I will never miss an opportunity of doing so.—What I mean, Sir, is the subject of fortifications. In order to consider what ought to have been done by ministers respecting this branch of our military system, it is necessary that I should shortly revert to the period of the treaty of Amiens; and they have told us, that ever since the signature of that treaty, the conduct of the French government towards us was "one uninterrupted series of aggression, violence, and insult."—Now, Sir, I say, that if they viewed it in this light, they ought to have endeavoured to put a stop to it at once by a spirited remonstrance, and if that remonstrance failed of producing the effect, they should have followed it up by a declaration of war. But

that under such circumstances, they could possibly think the peace would be of long duration, I will not do them the injustice to believe; for I should really be ashamed of my country, I should, I say, be ashamed of being an Englishman, if I thought that it was possible for men chosen by my Sovereign to govern this empire, were capable of making up their minds to the continuation of peace with a power, whose conduct towards us, they themselves tell you, evinced a determined resolution to degrade, vilify, and insult his Majesty and his government.—If, therefore, you believe their own declarations, it follows that immediately after the conclusion of the treaty of Amiens, it became their duty to lose no time in putting the country into such a state of defence as should best enable it to resist an attempt at invasion, such as we are now expecting: and amongst other means, there can be no doubt that they ought to have had recourse to a judicious system of fortifications. For, whatever variety of opinions there may be, as to the details, yet I will maintain, that the man who shall deny that the art of fortification affords great resources in defensive war, must be wholly ignorant of the military science, and equally ignorant of military history. The timely erection of good works would have greatly increased the difficulties of landing, would have retarded the enemy's progress when landed, and would have secured us against many disasters, which, in the present state of the country, may be the consequence of his gaining a temporary advantage.—But when I insist on the utility of fortifications, I beg that gentlemen will not do me the injustice to believe that I think the entrenched camp at Chelmsford will do us any good. I have been told, indeed, that in some places the parapet has already begun to fall into the ditch; and so far was I from being sorry to hear this, that I could not help expressing my hope that the whole of it might come down before the enemy arrives, as there would be no chance of its ever being occupied. I confess that I have not seen it; but from the general knowledge which I have of its position, I am quite sure that it can never be of any use, unless we can suppose the enemy to come here so eager and impatient to fight, that he would rather run his head against an entrenched camp than go two miles out of his way to avoid it. It really, Sir, puts me in mind of a proposal made by an officer in Ireland to encamp all the cavalry on the Curragh of Kildare, because it was the finest place in the kingdom for them to act upon. Now this plan would not have been a bad one, if one could have

been quite sure that an enemy, having little or no cavalry, would come to the Curragh on purpose to give ours an opportunity of attacking him. So also this camp might be useful, if the French would but be so good as to attack it. But the particular construction of this camp, as it has been described to me by officers who have seen it, is also extremely defective; for I understand, that instead of a chain of strong detached works, it is one continued line of entrenchment from right to left; which is a system now universally rejected by men of knowledge and experience. I am well aware that I should have no right to criticise the camp of Chelmsford, if it was true that I had ever made such proposals as have been attributed to me; for I have read in pamphlets and in newspapers, that I had seriously recommended one continued line of entrenchments from Yarmouth to the Downs and to Portsmouth. But really such misrepresentations as these are too gross and too absurd to be deserving of notice.—And now, Sir, after having roundly asserted that this fortified camp of Chelmsford, which must have cost a good deal of money, cannot be of any use, I owe it both to myself and to the House to explain, in a very few words, the principles upon which I have formed this opinion; and I think it is very easy to do it in a manner that will be intelligible even to persons who are not military. There are two modes by which a defensive army may check the progress of an invading enemy. The one is by a *direct* opposition to his march; that is, by constantly placing yourself before him in such a manner that it is physically impossible for him to advance without attacking you. The other more indirect, but in some cases equally effectual and safer method, is by occupying a strong position which is situated near the enemy's line of operation, that is to say, near the line by which his supplies of all sorts must pass from his magazines and military dépôts to his army.—In such a position you may stop his progress or oblige him to attack you at a great disadvantage; for, if he went forward and left your army behind him in this situation, you would effectually cut off his communication with his magazines.—But although this *indirect* mode of opposition may sometimes be effectual in a regular military operation on the continent; yet it cannot possibly be imagined that in our situation we should by proceeding in this manner, stop the progress of an enemy, who, from the very nature of his enterprise, must abandon all idea of preserving communications. Does any body imagine, that if he lands on the coast of Essex he

will begin by forming a magazine, and that in advancing into the country he will take care always to preserve his communication with this dépôt? Certainly not.—He will push on rapidly towards London, trusting to the effects of a sudden irruption: and in that case, how can the camp of Chelmsford stop him? It cannot, as I have said before, throw any *direct* obstacle in his way, because there are so many other roads in the country which will answer his purpose as well as that which it commands, and that in order to pass this camp, without attacking it, he need not make a detour of above two or three miles. And if we remain in it after he has passed it, what will be the relative situation of the two armies?—Ours will be in his rear, and will threaten his communication with—what? Why, with the coast on which he landed, and on which he has left nothing behind him:—Whilst he, on the other hand, will be between us and the capital; his approach to which we ought at all hazards to prevent. In short, Sir, I cannot conceive that in the present state of things this camp can be of any use, unless the enemy are such fools as to run their heads against it rather than take the trouble of turning it. Having thus expressed my opinion of what has been done (at least in this instance), I will not enter into many details of what might have been done, but will just mention one or two points so extremely obvious, that even men, who are not military, will readily feel the force of them. It is a matter of public notoriety that our dépôts of military stores are at present in a perfectly defenceless state; whereas, if his Majesty's ministers had made a proper use even of the time which has elapsed since the renewal of war, two or more of these great dépôts might, without any very extraordinary exertion, have been fortified in such a manner as to have been perfectly secure against a coup de main or assault. At present, if a temporary superiority or advantage gained by the enemy should render it impossible for us to prevent his approaching these dépôts, he may either greatly distress us by destroying them, or, what is still more important, may find in them supplies of military stores, of which he, at the time, may be in the greatest want.—The advantage of securing them is too obvious then to require any reasoning to illustrate it; and if it should be denied that there has been time enough to do it, even since the commencement of the war, I can only say, that I should be very glad to have an opportunity of proving it by indisputable calculations. — There is another point in

which our system of defence might have been equally improved; and it is also of a nature perfectly obvious. The batteries which at present exist for the defence of our coast are so weak, that they may without difficulty, be taken possession of by the enemy's infantry whenever it has effected its landing.—Now, I think that it must be evident to every man, whether military or not, that where guns are necessary for the defence of the coast, the object will be much more effectually accomplished by putting them into works that cannot be stormed, instead of these weak batteries; for, in that case, even although some of the enemy's infantry should get ashore, the batteries would still oppose the landing of his artillery and stores. Of this description are the Martello towers formerly mentioned in this House by my right hon. friend (Mr. Windham). Coast batteries more capacious than these towers might also have been constructed in such a manner, as to render it impossible for the enemy to take them without a slow process of undermining them, or erecting counter batteries on shore. With respect to there having been plenty of time to erect these Martello towers since the war broke out, I do not wish it to rest upon my assertion. I know that an engineer officer of the highest respectability, and whose name would have great weight, has said, that if in the course of the summer he had been ordered to construct them, they might have been completely finished many months ago. What he said upon this subject, was not with any view to criminate government; but merely expressive of his regret that a more effectual system had not been adopted for the defence of the coast. I should consider it as a breach of confidence to name him at present; but if his Majesty's ministers, who have challenged us to shew in what manner they have neglected to do all that might have been done for the defence of the country, will consent to a day being appointed for going into the inquiry, I shall be most happy to accept the challenge, and I will then call the officer to whom I have alluded, to the bar of the House. Whenever that inquiry comes, I am fully confident that I shall be able to prove, that many most material branches of our defence have been extremely neglected.—I am sorry, Sir, to have been under the necessity of taking up so much of the time of the House; but I have felt it my duty to do so from a strong conviction that the measures pursued by his Majesty's ministers are not such as ought to have been adopt-

ed to meet the attacks of the active, enterprising, and powerful enemy with whom we are engaged.

General Maitland said, there was much gallantry in the speech of the hon. member who had sat down, although there was not much novelty in it; but he confessed he heard much of that speech with very considerable regret and concern. In looking at the preparations of this country, he might have been led to suppose that the hon. member would have looked at them as a whole, instead of entering into a minute detail, and dwelling upon particular parts with a curiosity of criticism. He should have thought that he might have taken some pleasure in stating points which appeared to be favourable to this country in the present prospect of things, in the present contest: he should have thought some notice might have been taken of those things which were apparently to the disadvantage of the enemy—not a syllable of the army of France, but of its being an excellent army, headed by a man of uncommon genius and fortune, full of enthusiasm, &c., that they were an army of veterans, &c.; he should have thought it might have occurred to that hon. officer that they were not all veterans; he should have thought that hon. officer might have stated, that among our own army there were some veterans competent to meeting those of France, or any other army in this world; he should have thought that the hon. officer would have had some pleasure in stating that of this mighty and boasted army of France, there were some parts composed of Italian and other conscripts; he should have thought it might have occurred to the hon. officer that the militia of this country were equal and competent to meeting an equal number of any men; and that the hon. officer might have looked at the volunteers in a different point of view from that in which he did view them—that he would have found some consolation in reflecting that the mass of the volunteers of this country was a body of men preparing to fight for the King, the constitution, the laws, and the liberties of it, and that the hon. officer would have had some pleasure in reflecting on the contrast between such men and those conscripts of France, who were torn from their relations, fathers from their children, and children from their parents, coming towards our shores in fetters. He should have thought that the hon. officer would have had some pleasure in expatiating on these facts; but he took no such view of the subject. The hon. officer had acted, he was bound to believe, from the

purest motives, and other hon. gentlemen who had pursued the same line of conduct, had acted from the purest motives, for what appeared to them to be the interests of their country; yet he could not help saying, he had heard their speeches with considerable regret, not that he apprehended the ingenuity which they shewed, would in the least degree shake the determination of the people of this country in the pursuit of their cause, or induce them to fear the enemy, but he took up the subject in another point of view; he thought the speech of the hon. officer and some other speeches he had of late heard in that House, would, or might have in some respects a bad effect, for it must be well known now to every body, that what was said within the doors of that House was not confined to the members of that House, nor to this country, but went to the enemy, as well as all over the rest of the world, and he could not help thinking, there was no ingenuity that could be employed in France that could more increase the energy, and inspire the enterprize of the troops there so much as some of the speeches which had of late been delivered in that House. He knew that was not the intention of those hon. members, but that, he thought, was likely to be the effect of their speeches.—This course of speaking in that House, had a tendency to invite the enemy to come among us, and if they did, he had the confidence and happiness to think that the event would be more glorious to this country than had ever yet been recorded in the annals of the world. Having said thus much on the tendency of these speeches, he should take a short view of the topics urged by the hon. officer who had just preceded him in the debate, although he should not be minute upon them all, many of which, unless he had heard them pressed repeatedly, were such as he hardly should have thought necessary to answer. The first point he had to take notice of was, that of the exemptions of the volunteers. The hon. officer had stated broadly and roundly, that these exemptions had had the effect of hindering the recruiting of our army, the raising of the army of reserve, and of interrupting the progress of the militia, and possibly that it might have had the effect (for some times that had been insisted upon) of hindering the raising of our marine force; that was, the force of landmen in the navy. The best answer to these round and broad assertions was, that they were contrary to the fact as it stands. As it was only an assertion without proof, he should have thought it would have been followed up by some arguments to

shew at least the probability of this assertion, but the hon. officer had been contented with stating it as a fact. Now, he would ask upon the subject of these exemptions, if there was any thing to hinder volunteers from entering into the service of the navy or of the regular army in any part of the world? He knew of no such exemption; he knew of nothing that prevented any volunteer from entering as a substitute in any part of the army, neither did he know of any exemption which prevented a volunteer from entering as a substitute to serve in the militia. Nor did he believe that any considerable number of the volunteers would have served either in the militia or the army of reserve if they had no exemption; for he knew the great bulk of them to be persons capable of providing substitutes, and this was the last part and most material one, in the whole of the hon. officer's speech upon what he called the evils of the exemptions of the volunteers, for he had pressed it much to the House, that many of the volunteers, if drawn, must have served personally in the militia and in the army of reserve, because they could not find substitutes. Now, to judge of that, it would be necessary to see the number of substitutes who are now serving, and then it would appear that with regard to the militia and the army of reserve, the numbers were not one to 1000 of those who could not provide substitutes; and thus it appeared to him that gentlemen would do better if they adhered a little more to matter of fact, and indulged less in speculations and round assertions upon these topics; a little more adherence to the fact would have spared the observation that the volunteer system had prevented the raising of the militia and the army of reserve. As to the price which these substitutes would have cost for the army of reserve, the principle upon which gentlemen proceeded was erroneous, the price was not higher now than it had been in the course of the last war. This exemption of the volunteers had been stiled a bonus; now, in considering this matter, and estimating the value of this exemption, the correct way was, not to consider the price of a substitute, but the price of the insurance by which a man might secure a substitute in the event of his being drawn. Now upon that subject the average price in Scotland was a guinea and a half; in some instances a guinea, in many a guinea and a half; in some few, two guineas, but never higher than two guineas; and then he would ask, what became of this famous bonus? What was granted to the volunteer by way of exemption, was next

to nothing in value; and the volunteer in this respect, instead of receiving a bonus sustained a loss, and that a considerable one, by being a volunteer, instead of being subject, like any other person, to all other levies.—Having said this on the volunteers, he should now take a short view of the discipline of the volunteers; and upon that subject he owned he was astonished at almost every argument which had been advanced by the hon. officer to the discredit of the system of volunteers.—What the hon. officer, and indeed many others conveyed, was neither more nor less than this, that they are sorry that the volunteers have learnt too much; now, if they had learnt too much, had they not at least learnt as much as these hon. gentlemen wished them to learn?—As to the armed peasantry, the general said, he had never been able to understand precisely what gentlemen meant by them. The hon. officer had said an armed peasantry would drive like lightning the French into the sea if they came hither.—Now if they were to do this, they must some how or other do it by tangible matter; so he presumed would the volunteers. The hon. officer however wished these peasants to stand behind the hedges in twenties and tens together, and those were to be men who learnt the use of arms only for a few days, or perhaps only a few hours. Such a *posse comitatus* as that would never do. The hon. officer shook his head, and yet this was what he had said in his speech, and these were the persons who were to drive the French into the sea, and the volunteers were not to do it. This species of defensive system which the hon. officer would adopt, might make these armed peasantry good soldiers after two or three campaigns, and they had met a good many disasters, for that would be the only species of drilling which they would have; and this was a species of adversity which that system would most probably bring upon the country if it was adopted; for until men had been drilled, a musket on their shoulders was hardly of any use to them at all.—Wish regard to the Book of Regulations for the Exercise, published by order of H. R. H. the Commander in Chief, the hon. officer said it was totally useless as applicable to the volunteer corps. Now, he agreed with the hon. officer, when he said that as to the regular army, or militia, or volunteers, fighting in this country, that the mode in which they would be called upon to act must be different from that which is adopted in other countries; the truth was, that our system of matters in the way of training had more tactic in it

than was actually necessary, or ever adopted in action, but that men were brought to act further than was necessary, did not incapacitate them from acting as far as necessity required. He thought, therefore, that what the volunteers had gained in knowledge, was not only useful to themselves, but would be highly useful to the country at large in the hour of action; and he could not help saying that there was much useful information in the book to which the hon. officer had alluded, and which he thought of so little value to the volunteers in this country. Having said this, and having said that in his opinion the system adopted by the volunteers was preferable to that stated by the hon. officer, he should take a short view of the cloathing of the volunteers, which was objected to on account of its being red. He owned he did not see any objection to this, and the hon. officer seemed to quarrel with the cloathing of the volunteers, because it was better than that of the regular army; nor did he agree with the hon. officer as to the effect which their appearance would have upon the enemy. He had said also, that we would have no reserve if any of the volunteers were defeated. He did not assent to that, for if 10,000 of them fell in the field of battle, another 10,000 would instantly fill up their place, or fill the place of his Majesty's regular troops, if the enemy should unfortunately defeat them. Neither would the enemy think of beating them so easily as they might think of beating men in smock frocks; but if they were to defeat one army, they would soon see another as well cloathed, possibly better, perhaps not quite so well drilled as the former, yet drilled sufficiently for the purpose of action, which, he said, was the case at this moment; for he had no hesitation in saying, that the volunteers of this country were sufficiently drilled for the purposes of action. Now, if the enemy saw them coming in mighty numbers the very day after an action, and another equally numerous body the day following, the enemy would not only expect, but would soon be sure of a defeat. The hon. officer here quoted a variety of cases, and some of which he had never before heard of: he had quoted the case of the battle of Jemappe, to shew what Frenchmen could do; what French volunteers could do, they were a parcel of shopmen, and some of them barbers from Paris, and yet they drove the Duke of Brunswick off the confines of France. Now, if the French volunteers could do this, cloathed and equipped as they were, what was to be expected from

English volunteers, cloathed and accoutered as they are, and acting upon the best principle, in the best cause, for the best constitution in the world, impelled by the best feelings, and looking to the best object that could interest the human mind? Now, the subject of what had been accomplished by these smock-frock soldiers had been very copious. They had been tried in the rebellion in America, a country better adapted for them than any other in the known world, and under circumstances peculiarly favourable to that species of force.—That force was tried at the beginning of the rebellion; but afterwards the Americans found it necessary to use regular troops. What was the case when this smock-frock army came into the field against our regular troops? What was the effect of this smock force being relied on? Why, that every man John of them were taken; but afterwards they relied on regular troops. He observed also, that as to the engagements in La Vendée and the case of the Scotch, to which the hon. officer had referred, some of these had forks, but they only had them because they could not get firelocks; and the Highlanders, although they had not been disciplined, yet they fought in the way with which they were best acquainted, and so far they resembled regular troops. Why then it came to this, that men with a great deal of ardour and zeal may do a great deal without discipline, but to say, that even such men would not do better if they had the advantage of discipline, would be to say, that which was, in his opinion, saying that which was irrational.—He then proceeded to take a short view of the state of our navy. Gentlemen said, that this was not to compare with any other time; he did not say it was, but he had yet to learn that there was any department whatever in the navy deficiently conducted, or any exertion wanting; we were now infinitely superior to the united fleets of France, Spain, and Holland, and that to a greater extent than we were at any period of the last war; nor were we in any degree deficient in preparation to meet the enemy's flotilla off Brest, Boulogne, or any other port in France. Neither did he think that the opinion of the hon. officer was to be taken in preference to the very grave opinions of others who must have considered maturely the points to which he had called the attention of the House. But one would suppose, by the speech of the hon. officer, there was no other man who understood these matters, that he alone was to lay down the law for military matters in this country; whereas

he ought to remember there were others of greater experience and of much higher rank, than the hon. officer who advised his Majesty's ministers upon these important matters. This was particularly the case with respect to the preparations which had been made in a district which that hon. officer alluded to, he meant the entrenchment at Chelmsford; that was under the superintendence of General Hope, and others who had gained their laurels in Egypt; besides, if all the measures which the hon. officer had so freely censured were indeed so full of defect as he stated them to be, it might have been desirable that he should have proposed some practicable system that was better. Neither did he see the propriety of the hon. gentleman's sentiments respecting our military dépôts. Having gone over most of the topics of the speech of the hon. member who preceded him, he then addressed himself to the plan mentioned on a former occasion by Mr. Pitt, whose authority he admitted to be very high indeed, which was that of having adjutants from the line for all the volunteer corps; he admitted that to be extremely desirable, but he apprehended it to be altogether impracticable to any extent that could render it truly useful; for the truth was, that nothing was more difficult than to find a good adjutant that could be at all spared; he stated some other inconveniences which he apprehended would attend the attempt of carrying this plan into execution, and concluded with assenting heartily to the motion for the Speaker leaving the chair.

Colonel *Craufurd* said, that he could not have had the temerity to have stated some of those sentiments that the hon. general had attributed to him. He did not regard the volunteers as an useless body of men. He only thought that the irregular force of the country might have been better and less expensively called forth. The army of reserve he considered as an existing force between the regular and irregular strength of the country, and was of opinion that it should have been more attended to, while the irregular force might have been equally effective in any possible crisis, or perhaps more effective in its own place, by assuming less the appearance and attitude of soldiers without the reality. He thought, in fact, that the general mass of the country would have been better and more efficaciously employed by bringing into action another system perfectly different from that which had been pursued. He did not mean to say that this effect to which he alluded would have been produced by the difference of the sys-

tem only, but rather by the greater numbers which the system he had pleaded for would have certainly brought forward. By the armed peasantry, he never meant to hold up to the House a complete force which could of themselves be efficient, but only the services which a regular army might derive from them, though armed only with pikes, or even weapons of an inferior description.

Admiral *Berkeley* was induced to rise, from the introduction of an extraneous topic into the discussion, on which he felt it impossible for him to be silent as the crisis was urgent. He was at a loss to know what connexion there was between the administration of the Admiralty and the volunteer system. As the subject had been mentioned, it was with reluctance he came forward, though on every question relating to the Admiralty it might be supposed by the House that he would state his opinion. That, however, he had hitherto studiously avoided, because he had been bred under the noble lord who presided over that board, and felt a friendship and love for him, which made him abstain from any observations that might bear upon that noble lord. Whatever charges attached to the conduct of the Admiralty, he was sure that the noble Lord was exempt from them, but he was equally certain that blame was imputable somewhere. The noble lord had been by indisposition rendered incapable of attending to the arduous duties of his situation. How far sickness might have impaired the faculties of the noble lord he could not tell. The business had been left to unskilful hands. The hon. admiral had no hesitation in saying, that the naval preparations for the defence of the coast were not adequate to the purpose; and this opinion did not rest on his own judgment, but he could call to the bar every naval officer, from the highest to the lowest, to confirm it. He could call on many hon. friends in the House to prove that ministers had not attended to this subject. He could call on ministers themselves to prove that representations had been made to them so early as August, September, and October last, since which time the coast might have been placed in a most formidable state of defence. The hon. General (*Maitland*), had defended the noble lord's statement of the situation of our navy by a comparison with certain periods of last war, but he might as well have compared a first rate of the present day with Noah's Ark. Why had he not compared it with the French fleet? He should have been shewn its superiority by a comparison with her fishing

boats, which had been alluded to last sessions. But these fishing-boats were now turned into fleets, into 74's equal, if not superior, in number to the fleets employed in blockading them. The noble lord's comparison should have shown, that our preparations to resist the invasion, were equal to those which were made to carry it into effect. How came it to pass that the enemy had 500 gun-boats ready to attack our coast, while we had only 20 to oppose them. Highly as he respected the noble lord, he could suggest no excuse for his inaccuracy, than his being unacquainted with the subject. As to the bill before the House, he did not find any clause in it relating to the regulation of the Sea Fencibles, who could not by the provisions of any existing law, be ordered from one part of the country to another. He had expected the Secretary of State would have adverted to this description of force in his opening of the measure, and he should feel it his duty in this Committee to propose a clause for the purpose of extending the provisions of the bill to them. He hoped no time would be lost, as there was not a moment to lose. The hon. admiral concluded with asserting, that if proper attention had been paid to the business, we might have had at present 500 (he might say 5,000) gun-boats, equal if not superior to those of the enemy.

Captain *Markham* rose for the purpose of making a few observations on what had fallen from the hon. admiral, in detailing matters totally irrelevant to the question before the House. If the Admiralty had been culpable, it would be more regular to bring a direct charge against it, than to bring the question forward in the uncandid manner in which it had been introduced.—If his language was not Parliamentary, he was very sorry for it; but he could not help feeling as he did on hearing the observations of the hon. admiral, who stated that the faculties of the noble lord at the head of the Admiralty had been impaired by illness. Indisposed he certainly had been, but his faculties were as strong as at the time he taught the hon. admiral; how far the hon. admiral had improved by his instructions, he should prove hereafter. He had not been in the habit of speaking in the House, but he was obliged to notice what had fallen from the hon. admiral. In consequence of his supposing the faculties of the noble lord at the head of the Admiralty impaired, he must conclude, that the fault lay with the "inexperienced persons" to whom the administration of the Admiralty devolved. As to his own experience, he should not say any

thing; but the House was acquainted with that of his colleague (Sir T. Trowbridge). That gentleman's first voyage had been to the East Indies, where he had continued 12 years. His services since were well known. He should beg here to ask the hon. admiral where his foreign service had been? The hon. admiral had alluded to the propriety of attacking the enemy's flotillas in their own ports with small craft, but he should be glad to learn how he would manage that? To him it appeared impossible; the whole coast of Boulogne was fortified from Cape Grisnes, and supplied with vast numbers of mortars and guns, and where frigates could not go with safety it was perfectly incomprehensible to him how small craft could. It had been intimated by the hon. admiral that they should be employed in opposing the gun-boats of the enemy. Ridiculous! He should state his opinions as he felt them. He was not used to the smooth, flowing language spoken in that House, and should, therefore, utter his sentiments in the downright, rough language of his profession. If they were employed in this way, the first account that would be received after the next gale of wind, would be their total destruction. Another purpose for which the hon. admiral recommended small craft, was to oppose the enemy's flotillas on our own shores, by creeping like crabs along the coast. The hon. admiral might like to try his luck there, but there were no able and experienced officers who could think of any success from such efforts.—As to the hon. admiral's charge against the ordnance, he could say, that that department executed all its business in the most expeditious manner. If the charge was meant against the Admiralty, this was not the place to discuss the question, whether the gun-boats were deserving of the merit generally attributed to them. If the gun-boats had not been equipped in such a hurry, they would have been much better fitted up.—With respect to the observations of the hon. colonel on his statement respecting the low rate of insurance, he still continued to look upon that as the best criterion of the state of our navy: because Buonaparté would not have taken the seamen out of the privateers so long before he wanted them, so far back as May or June last. The privateers did not put to sea; not because they had not seamen but because they were blockaded. He should state also, that the rate of insurance was lower at present than in 1801, before the present Board came into office.

Colonel *Eyre* said, he rose to express his regret, not unmixed with indignation, at

the observations which had fallen from a gent. early in the debate (Mr. Francis), because they tended to degrade and vilify the system of defence to which the country was to trust. That system was not nor could be unobjectionable; but if any delay had been made, the enemy would have been in the heart of the country before any effectual preparation had been made to repel them. He should not then take notice of any of the minor objections, but should barely advert to one which seemed to strike at the root of the system, namely that half-drilled troops would be serviceable only for parade, and not in action. A german officer, he was inclined to think, or a British officer with German feelings, might be disappointed with such troops, but he was convinced a British officer with British feelings would know how to avail himself of the enthusiasm and bravery of the British people in so glorious a cause. Last war had furnished a striking example of what was to be expected from an armed peasantry. The *levy en masse* in Flanders in 1793, which was neither composed of regular troops, nor consisted of an armed peasantry, and fighting for their country and every thing dear to them, could yet not make any impression on British troops. So long ago as June, it had been said, that 100,000 men would not be terrified by a few shots nor prevented from making their attempt. What had delayed their attempt, what had prevented them from attempting the capital? What but the vigour of his Majesty's councils.—He thought the volunteer system a glorious defence. It was not perfect, but it might be made so, if all parties would unite to strengthen his Majesty's government, instead of uniting to turn out his ministers.

Sir William Young thought that the bill would interfere with the other acts for the defence of the country, and the dearest prerogative of his Majesty. The dangers of the country were so imminent, that it had been well stated the youngest in the House might not outlive them. He deprecated, therefore every measure of expediency, on an occasion so serious and alarming. The hon. baronet then adverted to the different distinctions between the volunteers, those under the act of the 42d of the King, and those subsequently accepted. The former amounted to 90,941; those under the Defence Act to 245,116, and, by the exemptions, that proportion of the prime population of the empire was shut out from the army of reserve or militia. The consequence was, that the ballot fell upon the married men, which laid a heavy expense on their

parishes. The hon. baronet spoke at some length; all his observations went to establish the distinction between what he conceived the different species of volunteers, and the injury the public service sustained from the exemptions.

Mr. Fuller seemed to think the volunteers, on their present system, preferable to armed peasantry; the dress of the volunteers being like the line he thought advantageous, as it would prevent the enemy's *tirailleurs* killing off officers from particular corps. He, however, objected to the Speaker's leaving the chair, as he thought the volunteer system well enough as it was. There was no necessity for the bill; indeed, the Court of King's Bench had sufficiently declared the law, and put the question on that head to rest. If the bill went on, the people would fear there was something in its future operation that they had now no notion of. As the system at present existed, it was at length clearly understood.

Mr. Fox.—I own, Sir, that I am much surprised at the language used by my hon. friend under the gallery (Gen. Maitland), and still more surprised at the very extraordinary sentiment with which the hon. gent. behind me (Col. Eyre) closed his speech. Of the latter I shall first take notice. The hon. gent. seems highly to disapprove of any thing in the shape of opposition to his Majesty's present ministers, and expresses an opinion that all parties should combine to support them, in order to second their endeavours for the national defence, and, in a word, that all should be unanimity for that object; but although the hon. gent. does so broadly assert that dissension prevails, and that means are used to embarrass the operations of government, I would call upon the hon. gent. to point out a single instance where any obstruction has been offered to the exertions of government to provide for our security. It is easy for any gent. to use a round assertion, but I challenge the hon. gent. to quote any case to justify the charge that any party has been backward to contribute its assistance to the government, whatever they may think of the ministers by whom the government is administered. All, in fact, is, and has been, union for the public safety, from the moment that safety has been pronounced in danger. The people have every where pressed forward in the cause of their country, and their zeal has received no damp or check from any quarter, but from the ministers themselves; and, without looking to the innumerable proofs of ardent and active exertion made by the gentlemen of that party to whom the

hon. gent. seemed more particularly to allude, I shall only cite one remarkable instance in the North of England. Let the hon. gent. look to a distinguished and hon. friend of mine in that direction (the Duke of Northumberland), who, to be sure, could not hold forth such a brilliant example of patriotism as he has done, if his property were not very extensive, but his efforts are not the less honourable on that account. That noble duke has, to his immortal honour, raised a body of not less than 1500 men, whom he has clothed, equipped, disciplined, and furnished with every necessary, arms alone excepted. These they have had from government. What union, then, does the hon. gent. require? The most cordial union exists every where in support of the country and the government, and I believe the union is almost equally general against the ministers; but yet I am astonished to find some gentlemen forward to vaunt of those ministers, and to contend that the zeal and union which so universally prevails are attributable to those ministers. Why, certainly, they have been produced by ministers—but how? By their mismanagement: and if upon this they mean to ground their triumph, they are no doubt entitled to it. They have brought the country to the brink of destruction, and have made us all unite for our own security. Really, therefore, if ministers will claim merit for thus exciting the public spirit, I confess that I cannot deny the justness of their pretensions.—With respect to the observations made by my hon. friend, I repeat that I heard them with surprise, not less as to their substance, than as to the tone and manner in which they were delivered. I have often had occasion to defend the freedom of debate, and I declare I never witnessed a more extraordinary attempt made to interrupt it, than in the instance I allude to. It seemed to be the drift of my hon. friend's remarks, that no officer below the rank of a lieutenant-gent. should presume to state his opinion in this House upon any military topic connected with the defence of the country. But how different is this from the conduct pursued by my hon. friend on a former occasion! I remember when we undertook to censure, and very freely too, the proceedings of officers superior to him, I will not say in abilities, but very much so in rank; when he was only a major, he commented, and with some severity, upon Generals Meadows, Musgrave, and others, and my hon. friend exposed himself in so doing to some severe animadversions, against which I defended him. I hope, therefore, that he will not be surprised

if, acting upon the same principle which influenced my conduct with regard to himself, I now take up the defence of the hon. officer who has been this night the object of his attack. If, indeed, the opinions advanced by my hon. friend were pushed to the extent which he appears to wish, it would go to this, that no officer who is a member of this House, however high his reputation, (and surely no man will question the reputation and military talents of the hon. officer to whom my hon. friend has alluded,) should presume to give his opinion upon military subjects to a superior officer. I understand it has been said, that such subjects should not be discussed at all in this House, but that the matter should be entirely left to the consideration of officers of experience. To this opinion, however, I never will subscribe; but even if true, who, I would be glad to know, has a stronger claim to attention on the score of experience than the hon. officer I refer to; and yet my hon. friend would restrain him, and why? not lest his opinions should clash with those of other officers of high rank and authority, but because the matter ought, in my hon. friend's judgment, be left entirely to the consideration of such persons; but yet my hon. friend does not venture to say that the points alluded to by the hon. officer, have been, or will be considered by the high officers, for whose monopoly, not only of military power, but of military knowledge and attention, he seems to be so very anxious. My hon. friend does not know, however, that their attention extends to all the topics alluded to by the hon. officer, and still he would wish him to be silent upon those most important points, not because he actually differs with the high officers, for whom my hon. friend feels such reverence, but lest he should differ from them on some things which they may hereafter think proper to consider. This was not the only opposition which the hon. officer experienced from my hon. friend; for, after condemning the general principle of the hon. officers at all entering into the discussion, my hon. friend endeavoured to combat the detail of his speech,—a speech for which the House is highly indebted to him,—a speech containing more professional information, than any speech perhaps that I ever heard in this House, and conveyed in a manner so conspicuous as to be more intelligible to men unacquainted with military tactics, than military essays generally are.—The first part of my hon. friend's objections applied to the argument so often used against the volunteer system, on the ground of the

exemptions granted to the volunteers; but I would ask, can any man seriously contend that such an argument is not well founded, and that those exemptions have not materially impeded the ballots for the militia and the army of reserve, and also crippled the recruiting for the regular army? The fact is too notorious to be denied. My hon. friend, however, took up these exemptions as a matter justly due to the volunteers, and highly right in ministers to propose, and Parliament to adopt. But, if it was a matter of right, it was certainly right by mistake, for there is no doubt that ministers did not intend to grant such exemptions at the time the volunteer bill was passed last summer. If they did, it does not appear on the face of that bill; and sure I am, that it was not so understood in any part of the country that I have heard of. On the contrary, I remember that subscriptions were set on foot in various parishes, to relieve the volunteers from the ballots for the militia or army of reserve, by providing substitutes for such of them as might be chosen for either of those descriptions of force. Is it possible, then, if exemptions were in the contemplation of the framers of the bill I have mentioned, that it should be so universally misunderstood? and yet, it seems, it was; for some time after the enactment of this bill, out came the opinion of the attorney-general, who was not, I must suppose, at all consulted in the first instance, or the bill would have been explicit. No! Ministers first frame Acts of Parliament to puzzle him, and then they ask his opinion upon them. His opinion upon subjects thus circumstanced were likely to be erroneous and so they have happened to be.—I am flattered that my opinion respecting the preference of an armed peasantry to the volunteer system happens to agree with that of the hon. officer to whom I have already referred. But my hon. friend has said, that the volunteers would be preferable for active service. I would, however, appeal to his judgment, whether they could be competent to the same duties as a regular army; and whether they can be fit for any other description of service as an active, hardy, armed peasantry? The hon. gent. who spoke last has referred to the state of the volunteers in a particular county; but does he mean to say, that the state of our force would not be much improved, that the defence of the counties of Sussex and Kent would not be better secured, by the establishment of the principle of an armed peasantry, than by the present amount of the volunteer force, to be found in these or in any of the other counties,

particularly on the coast? Some stress has been laid on the advantages likely to arise from the colour of the cloathing, &c. of the volunteers, as contrasted with an armed peasantry; but this very difference I reckon among the defects of the volunteer system; and the quibbling remarks on a smock-frocked army are not worthy of reply. If the amount of the volunteers be dwelt upon; if I am told that we have in them an army of 400,000 men, I answer, that by resorting to an armed peasantry, we might have two millions, and more effective, requiring less drilling, easier prepared for the objects to which it is right to apply them, and less expensive. My principal objections to the volunteers, indeed, arise out of their expense and their mode of instruction, and to the latter particularly. Too much time is employed in endeavouring to teach that which is not necessary, and which they never can completely learn. By such a mode of proceeding much mischief is, and much more may be, done. To this, indeed, the words of Pope may be applied

“A little learning is a dangerous thing;” and for this reason, that men are apt to draw inaccurate deductions, and to rest upon imperfect grounds. The volunteers, by such injudicious instructions, are withdrawn from that which they might acquire with facility and use with much more effect, and the operation of such a system will be to give their minds a wrong direction. If, however, it was wished to render the volunteers perfect in this system of discipline, how came it that the instructions should have commenced so late that, but a few months ago, many volunteer corps were without a single musket, and even at this hour there are several volunteers who have never fired a ball in their lives? Men should not be obliged to travel through the tedious course of military tactics when the danger was so urgent as it is admitted to be on all hands. A force not thus perplexed with circuitous lessons would be much easier collected, and more effectual: armed also with other weapons, than muskets, they, perhaps, would be able more completely to annoy the enemy. I remember that some miserable expeditients have been resorted to in order to depreciate the opinions of the hon. officer. His recommendation of pikes was at first discountenanced, and yet, since then, his plan has been adopted and acted upon to a considerable extent. Above 100,000 pikes have been distributed by government, and I have no doubt those weapons will be more useful in the hands of peasants who shall not undergo the trouble of any rehearsal

before they come to action, than volunteers trained to the musket. I have heard that some gentlemen are of opinion, that the volunteers might be most advantageously employed by attaching them in the hour of service to battalions of the line. Of such a plan I very much disapprove, or of any project to bring them into action, in a solid body. When the hon. officer on the lower bench recommended pikes to be distributed to the volunteers, ministers confessed there was a scarcity of muskets, and that circumstance alone, independently of the known efficacy of that weapon, particularly manifested in the course of the French revolution, was sufficient. — The hon. member behind me (Col. Eyre) has insisted upon the importance of the volunteers, for a very strange reason indeed, which he urged with great confidence, namely, that the volunteers, however, as he said, they were depreciated in this country, were held to be so formidable by the enemy, that they operated to prevent him from attempting his threatened plan of invasion, although he was ready in June last; but, if he had come then he would have surprised a vast proportion of the volunteers without arms. If, however, the enemy was completely prepared in June, and the volunteers in their then state were really sufficient to intimidate him, there can be no danger whatever, now that that body is so much larger and so much better disciplined; nor can it be necessary to introduce this bill, or to make any further bustle of preparation. However, perhaps the enemy has postponed the execution of his design for other reasons. Possibly he waits until the volunteers shall learn their exercise—until they are properly drilled! This would be a magnanimous proceeding—but to be serious. I know that there are many different opinions upon the mode provided for disciplining the volunteers, and I have my doubts. Upon this, however, I have no doubt; that the system is altogether not comparable to that of an armed peasantry, who could be had in every district in sufficient numbers, and who would furnish the most powerful assistance to the regular army. It should be recollected, that the great defence of a country consists of an armed people. The enemy may have a large disciplined army, and so may you to resist him; but that from which you would derive your great advantage, that which always must form the powerful opponent of an invading army, would be an armed peasantry. That should be your principal defence. It is like the weapon with which nature furnishes animals for their protection. It is the great

bulwark of a country. You might thus have an aid in every village and town, more numerous and effective than your volunteers; and you might put the country in such a state of defence, that the enemy, even after a victory, should he obtain one, over your regular army in the field, dare not send out a detachment to forage, or for any other purpose, without exposing them to be shot at from every hedge, from every cottage, from every enclosure—by men, not dressed so as to be easily perceivable, not wearing those coloured garments which would put the enemy's troops on their guard. Thus might they be harassed and weakened, even after being victorious in the field; and we must not be so sanguine as to suppose that they may not sometimes have the advantage; for however brave our troops may be, and no man has a higher opinion of their valour and skill than I have, we must attend to that calculation which has ever been regarded by the highest military authorities, even by Julius Caesar himself, that fortune has a great share in deciding the events of war. When such events should happen to be against us, I would particularly look to the assistance of the smock-frocked force, as some gentlemen have termed it. A noble lord in treating this subject, has said, that he was old enough to recollect the American rebellion, as he called it, and, certainly, if he recollected all the circumstances of the case he so describes, he would be aware that the term rebellion was not applicable, and that the use of it was long since abandoned. He would also recollect that which was very fortunate to the subject of this debate, that America was victorious over her opponents, not because she had a large regular army, but because she was an armed country, and the result of that popular armament was, that two of our best generals, at the head of some of our best troops, were compelled to surrender. Precisely that kind of force which so conquered in America, which emancipated Holland, which triumphed in Switzerland, and performed such prodigies of valour in la Vendée and Ireland, is what I should recommend to be resorted to in this country. The misfortune is, with a view to this, that, as I understand, the volunteers have taken so many arms that enough are not left for arming the peasantry; but there are weapons in abundance to be found to suit them and they will not require much training. If this plan be not attended to, many parts of the country will, in the event of invasion be left quite defenceless; for when a volun-

teer corps is called into service, what becomes of the town or village to which it may belong? Their natural defenders are gone where they are not likely to be so useful as they might be, under another system, to the ultimate security of the country and the overthrow of the enemy. This is a painful consideration; but it naturally arises out of a bad system—a system which rather perplexes the volunteers than contributes to improve them, which, in fact, overloads them with a kind of instruction of no practical utility, instead of giving them that which would fit them for the object to which their service is applicable. This is the mischief; it is as it were to send a man to a university to learn general knowledge, and afterwards to tell him that he must study to qualify for a divine or a physician. I should think it would be better to begin the education of the one and the other, with that which might best fit them for their proper pursuits. It would therefore be much wiser to teach the volunteers, not the stiff and intricate manœuvres of Prussian discipline, but that only which is essential, not that which should assimilate them to a regular army, which has begun to learn such discipline; but that which should assimilate them to an armed peasantry, to whom it is naturally extremely desirable that they should be more alike than they are. Nothing can be a greater mistake than to suppose, that the colour of the volunteer clothing will be advantageous in the event of invasion, as the Secretary of State enumerated; for this reason, that an intimate connection between them and our regular army must injure the latter; and also, that if they should be defeated in any instance, the singularity of dress will of course induce the enemy to suppose them soldiers, and that supposition will tend to their encouragement. My wish is, that instead of such troops, we should have the people armed, in order that in every direction the enemy might have persons to annoy, without being warned by alarming appearances; that he should always have reason to fear in whatever direction he moved; that the apprehension of meeting a foe in a brown coat should haunt him like a spectre; that he should feel that he could not pass through a lane or along a hedge with safety. If you abandon this plan, I am sure you will considerably diminish the fears of an invading enemy; for when he conceives he has none but red coated foes to meet with, his confidence will, of course, be greater. The evil of this goes very deep.

It applies to the principle of the volunteer system. The mischief of affording the enemy the means of ascertaining the whole amount of your military defence is extremely obvious. When he becomes acquainted that he has only 500,000 men to contend with, you of course do him a service; he will then know his enemies by their dress.—The hon. gent. who has just sat down has remarked on the tendency of the sentiments so often urged by my right hon. friend on the bench below me (Mr. Windham) respecting the volunteer system, and seems to imagine that the right hon. gent. was inconsistent in accepting a command in a volunteer corps; but inconsistency does not at all follow from this circumstance. The right hon. gent. avails himself of the system, bad as it is, to promote the public defence, because there is no other.—As to the whole of the remarks made upon this system, many of which have been misrepresented, as well as the motives of those who made them, I beg to observe, that without wishing to abolish the system altogether, it is impossible to remedy its defects, if they be remediable, without having in view the principles of a better system.—With regard to the bill before the house, it in reality contains nothing in the shape of a remedy, nor indeed anything at all new, and the system it professes to support cannot, in my mind, be of long duration; it is not of a durable nature. The dread of invasion, which produced it, will not long avail, and as soon as the danger disappears, or may not be attended to, and which may be the case, should it long continue to be merely talked of, the spirit of the volunteers will, from the nature of the human mind, be likely to relax; and who can pretend to say how long, for how many years, the enemy may keep up all the appearances of an intention to invade us, without actually attempting it? Those considerations weigh with my mind very strongly, and confirm my opinion of the superior character of an armed peasantry.—As to the opinion, that in order to guard against the evil of a slow recruiting for the regular army, it would be desirable to form a kind of perpetual army of reserve, to be raised by ballot, from which volunteering for general service was to be more encouraged, I shall at present make but one observation, namely, that I am no friend to the extension of the principle of raising men by ballot. It is a kind of lottery, in which ten men may be said to toss up which shall serve; or instead of each contributing 40l. one to contribute 20l. —To the allusions which have been so

frequently made to the conduct of the naval department, I think it would be much fairer to bring forward the subject for a full discussion. I have no doubt that the noble lord who presides over that board, will be able to vindicate his character; but, at the same time, as so many charges have been thrown out against the Admiralty, I think it would be better at once to institute an inquiry, which will enable the House to make up its mind upon this most important subject; and, I am sure that that noble personage is not one of those who would be likely to shrink from inquiry.

Mr. Pitt.—Sir; differing as I do from the hon. gent. who spoke last, in many points respecting the volunteers, I nevertheless have the satisfaction to agree with him in many of the propositions which he has laid down. There is no one sentiment advanced by the hon. gent. to which I assent more cordially than in the necessity of adopting some measures to give a degree of consistency and permanence to our defensive force. It is undoubtedly true, that at the present the great object ought to be to direct our efforts to meet the immediate danger with which the country is threatened; nothing, certainly, ought to be neglected in the first moment of alarm or danger, all future considerations, however important, ought to give way to the present necessity and immediate danger. But that being provided for, we ought not to hesitate one moment in adopting the most effectual measures for rendering our defensive system permanent, and of providing against a recurrence of danger in future times. If we should prevent the enemy from effecting the invasion this year, and that should lead us into a false security, and encourage us to slacken our means of defence, it certainly must end in our total ruin. I am, therefore, happy to find the opinion so strongly inculcated by the hon. gent. that we ought not to be content with our present exertions alone. It is perfectly true, as that hon. gent. has stated, that although the natural impulse of a brave and loyal people has led them to make the greatest and most unparalleled exertions, which have removed us from immediate danger, yet it is undoubtedly necessary to adopt measures to guard against that long protracted, and lingering danger with which the enemy may threaten us. Because, the effect of deterring the enemy from making his attempt, by a demonstration of the force and spirit of the country, may have the effect of making us relax in our efforts, which might produce the most disastrous consequences. I therefore, think we should

act wrong indeed, if we were to satisfy ourselves with merely providing against the present danger, without adopting some great, general, and permanent system, equal, not only to the present danger, but equal to that danger which may continue to threaten us, and which may not be terminated by the present war. I hope, indeed, that our danger will terminate with the present war, because I hope, we shall not lightly consent to make peace without the attainment of security for the future, a security which cannot be obtained while France remains in her present situation. I do not allude to any particular form of government which may prevail in that country, but while she remains as she is, the arbitress of the continent of Europe, a perfectly military country, under the guidance of the most absolute and unlimited government, that perhaps, ever existed; unshackled by any of those checks that operate upon other governments, unshackled by that check which has operated in every other instance, though, perhaps, unseen in even the most arbitrary states—I mean, the influence of public opinion, which has never yet been stifled in any other country but in France; and which has always operated more or less, even in the most servile forms of government that ever disgraced Europe. In France, however, this check of public opinion is now so destroyed, that no man dares hardly, even in thought, question the conduct of the government, however it may squander the treasures of their country, or, however it may lavish the blood of the people. The system in that country is different from any that ever existed before; and must be met by corresponding exertions on our part; and however painful those exertions may be, we must determine to submit to them, as the lot which is inseparable from those days in which it has pleased Providence to cast our existence.—With regard to the present volunteer system, though I am far from thinking that it has reached anything like perfection; though, I think it is capable of, and I have no doubt, will receive, great improvement; yet still I do think the principles on which it is founded are perfectly right; and, I have no doubt, that, coupled with other regulations, and these not very difficult ones, it may be rendered a permanent security against future danger. It is no disparagement to the spirit of the volunteers or their devotion to their country, to say, that it is impossible to trust continually to the operation of that volunteer spirit. It is no disparagement to the spirit of the people, to say, that when the immediate danger is passed, they may, however erroneously,

doubt the necessity of their future exertions. The volunteer system was founded upon the conviction of immediate danger; if that cause should cease, it is not at all extraordinary that the effect should cease also. If that is the case, it becomes the duty of Parliament to do that for the country which spontaneous zeal cannot do. That spontaneous zeal has hitherto superseded almost the necessity of legislative measures, and has counteracted no small share of error on the part of the executive government. It certainly cannot, however, be expected to continue for any great length of time to the extent to which it has now reached: the question to be considered then is, whether there are any means of giving to that system a degree of permanency which does not belong to it? The system which was adopted last year, and in my opinion, wisely adopted, was, that it would be right to invite the voluntary exertions of the people, and if they reached to a sufficient extent, it would be much preferable to compulsory service. It now became the duty of Parliament, to provide the permanent means for putting in motion so much of the force and population of the country, as future exigency might render necessary. Upon this subject, however, I do not mean to say that nothing has been done: they have provided the means, I do not say they are sufficiently digested and matured; but they have provided the means, in case the volunteers should fall short of that number which is deemed necessary for the security of the country, of enabling his Majesty to call upon the different classes, even, if it should be necessary, to the extent of the whole population of the country. In doing this, the legislature has laid the foundation of that system, which may be so improved as to establish a great and permanent system of defence, which will place the country in a state of permanent security in all future contests. When I say, that such a foundation has been laid, I am far from meaning that it is perfect; it certainly requires, and I hope, will receive, much improvement; and, that part which relates to the enrolment of persons, undoubtedly requires considerable revision. Upon that point, however, much difference of opinion prevails, as to the measures which ought to be adopted to bring that system to a state of permanent perfection; but these are considerations to which we may attend after we have matured the present volunteer system, and thereby provided effectual means of guarding against immediate danger. When that great object shall be attained, we shall then be at leisure to consider of the means of calling out the

whole population of the country, if ever circumstances should render it necessary. It is now understood, that if in any place the number of volunteers fall short of the number which is considered necessary, the government is determined to call out the classes under the defence act, and I have no doubt that if ever the disappearance of immediate danger should relax the spirit of the volunteers, there are means to be found in that system to keep the numbers entire. There is another source from which, in my opinion, considerable support might be derived to the volunteer system. If the idea which I threw out on a former occasion should meet with the approbation of the House, if it should be thought right to allow such a ballotted force to exist as I before suggested, to feed and maintain the regular army, and that force is kept up annually by fresh ballots, the exemptions which volunteers would then enjoy, would, I am convinced, induce men cheerfully to continue in volunteer corps. As far, therefore, as relates to the question of permanence, I see no difficulties that are at all likely to render that an unattainable object, always bearing in mind, that the first great object we have to perform is to render the volunteer force as efficient as possible in the present instance. I do contend that this circumstance alone would be a sufficient provision against any diminution of the volunteer force to an amount at all to be taken into serious consideration on a general view of the whole subject. Whatever may be the apprehensions on the subject of the sudden falling off of the volunteer force, it really does appear to me extraordinary to urge these apprehensions as any inducements to the House to suspend the discussion of the bill now before the House. On the contrary, whatever the defects of the volunteer system may be, it is surely at once wise and politic that a bill designed, on the spur of the moment, to remedy evils allowed on all sides to exist, should pass with the least possible interruption. Evils of a less pressing nature may afterwards come under consideration, and I am sure, Sir, that it is very far from my wish, to declare that there are not in the volunteer system, as it at present stands, many circumstances which furnish an ample field for future deliberation. What I now recommend and desire is, that we should on the present occasion enter on the immediate consideration of the bill, that an opportunity should be given for introducing such clauses as appear to members calculated to render it more perfect, and if we cannot obviate every inconvenience, at least to do what we can,

to render it as much as possible applicable to the purposes for which it was framed.—So much has been already said this evening, on the subject of the volunteer force generally, that little new can be expected. In the observations contained in the very able speech of an hon. Colonel (Craufurd) opposite me, there was, doubtless, Sir, a great deal of matter highly worthy of consideration. I must, however, be permitted to say, that the hon. officer carried one part of his argument against the volunteer system to an unjustifiable length. The hon. officer seemed to argue, that the volunteer force was meant to be substituted for the services of a regular army. I cannot conceive on what such an idea is founded. It is certainly one which I never could for a moment have entertained. If the argument drawn from the idea that the volunteer system interferes with the recruiting of the regular army can be removed, then the objections from this source must be done away. I will take on myself then to affirm, that the volunteer system, so far from counteracting the recruiting for the regular army, has a tendency directly different. A right hon. gent. below me (Mr. Yorke), on a former evening, gave an instance, taken from the St. George's corps of volunteers where the number of those who had entered into regiments of the line was so great, as fully to shew the fallacy of the objection to which I have now referred. But this is far from being a solitary instance. Other examples of the same spirit are to be found in every part of the country. Such an effect is indeed to be deduced from the constitution of human nature. Mankind are the creatures of habit. Attention to military affairs begets a military spirit, and perhaps, however much to be lamented may be the propensity to contest, it is fortunate for this nation that the spirit for a military life rises in proportion to the extent of those dangers by which a military life is rendered necessary in society. No argument can therefore be drawn against the volunteer system, from any supposition of its being inconsistent with the recruiting of the regular army.—As to the question immediately before the House, the test seems to be, shall we throw out the bill altogether because it contains so little new matter, nothing either to facilitate the augmentation of the regular army, or to provide for the better organization of any other species of force? The hon. gent. on the other side (Mr. Fox) says, that he cannot be a friend to the present volunteers, because it appears to him that the discipline of the volunteers is not such as the nature of their service requires, and he

looks to the application of another species of force directed in a way totally different. He professed himself an advocate for the services of an armed peasantry, as infinitely preferable to any voluntary service derived from the present system of voluntary service. I wish, Sir, on this point, to recall to the attention of the House, that the question we have now to consider is not what under given circumstances, would be the best system of national defence, but what is that which can be obtained in the shortest time possible? I have already declared, that the volunteer system was far from appearing to me in its present state to be perfect; but the question is, whether we shall allow a bill, designed to improve that system, which has been read a second time, to go to a Committee, in which a variety of important alterations, may be introduced; or whether we shall allow the bill to drop, and at a moment when the great crisis may be at hand, enter on a system entirely new in all its parts, and crude in all its dependencies? We have only to consider at present, how far it would be proper to allow the blanks to be filled up in the bill this evening, to give every gentleman to-morrow a fair opportunity of delivering his thoughts on a subject so interesting to every order in the community. —With many of the remarks of the hon. gent. who spoke last, I do most heartily concur; but I am sorry that I have the misfortune to differ with him in one or two instances, which before I sit down I shall have occasion to state. To the subject of the limitation of the number of volunteers, I request the attention of the House for a few moments; and I shall first allude to the number of volunteers in the counties situated on the coast. It will be recollected, Sir, that in fixing the amount of the number of voluntary offers to be commuted for compulsory service, ministers agreed to fix the general standard at six times the amount of the militia. The policy of making such a limitation was never to me very apparent; but it struck me as particularly objectionable, as applicable to the situation of Kent and other maritime counties more immediately exposed to direct invasion. In the county of Kent, with which I have the good fortune to be connected, the public spirit rose to a pitch far beyond the most sanguine expectations. It was lively and vigorous, it was adequate to any emergency, and never exhibited the least evidence of decay, till it was checked by the restriction of ministers. It appeared clear to every man who reflected for a moment on the subject, that the same criterion as to the number of vo-

lunteers, could not be applied to Kent or any other county on the coast, as to Derby, to Warwick, or any other county in the interior. The gentlemen and magistrates of the county of Kent were soon so fully aware of this, and convinced that the adoption of the limitation of ministers would be highly inexpedient, that they actually met for the purpose of preparing a representation on the subject. Such a representation was prepared, and ministers so far yielded to these remonstrances, that the amount of offers of voluntary service was by one-half extended. But even after this concession on the part of ministers, I have to state, Sir, that 5,000 individuals had offered their services, which ministers have not thought proper to receive. I, in the first instance, lamented the existence of the limitation, and I have seen nothing which has not tended materially to confirm my original impressions. That in the maritime counties the volunteer system is for immediate danger, appears to me perfectly clear, and I very much doubt whether the peasantry of the county of Kent would be at all adequate to act as such an irregular force as the hon. gent. described. One or two circumstances will be sufficient to establish the truth of this position. The hon. gent. and those who hold similar opinions on this subject, have endeavoured to fortify their arguments by what happened in La Vendée and in America. We are told, Sir, that in both these cases it was by the exertions of an armed peasantry that victory was accomplished. It is true, Sir, that the peasantry of La Vendée, headed by some of the ablest and the most heroic leaders the world ever saw, maintained a most glorious struggle against the monsters who tyrannized over France. But, Sir, is it necessary for me to recall to the recollection of the House the circumstances of that afflicting warfare? It was by encountering every form of misery and suffering, it was by submitting to every aggravation of cruelty, that those brave men were upheld in their resistance to injustice and oppression. They saw around them the ravages of fire and of sword. They beheld their abodes consumed, their dearest relatives massacred, their fondest hopes destroyed. Animated by an unconquerable and heroic spirit, they thought no sacrifices too great which were to be the purchase of that independence which was dearest to their hearts. For their glorious exertions they must be objects of emulation to nations in every age; but, I will ask, whether our situation is at all similar to that in which these generous men were called upon to act? We have not yet been reduced to the neces-

sity of making up our minds to such terrible sacrifices. If the enemy were to effect a landing in Kent, in Sussex, in Essex, or any of the maritime counties near the metropolis, I know that every man would perish sooner than that they should obtain any thing like permanent possession. But what, Sir, in the first instance, is to be supposed will be the object of the enemy? Can we imagine that on their landing they will consume their time in carrying in their steps, plunder and devastation? These horrors will doubtless be disseminated over the land, if ever the fatal period of successful invasion should arrive. But, in the first instance, we are to imagine, that inferior objects will be neglected, and that if the enemy were to land 60 or 70 miles from the capital, they would endeavour to pass along with the rapidity of a torrent, and never halt till they had taken their station under the walls of London. To think that even the fall of the metropolis would be the evidence of the subjugation of the country, is an idea not to be entertained even for a moment. It will not, however, be denied, that such an event would be one pregnant with terrible disasters, and that no means ought to be left untried, by which so serious an evil might be avoided. With this view it is necessary that we should have a force which may be able most speedily to act together, to afford the means of immediate annoyance to the enemy, and to dispute every inch of their progress to the capital.—It appears to me, then, that the volunteer system is the one best calculated to afford this force, so far as the defence of the maritime counties is involved, and it does not strike me, that the argument drawn from the exertions of the royalists in La Vendée, are at all applicable. Nor does it appear to me, that the argument drawn from the history of the American war, is at all more conclusive. It is true, that at the commencement of that war, the Americans did employ an irregular force, but it was not by such a force that their final triumph was effected. They had time, from the circumstances in which they were placed, to accustom these troops, at first raw and inexperienced, to all the varieties of discipline, and they received from our troops, the lessons which afterwards were made the foundation of victory. Besides, Sir, when the situation of America is considered, it is impossible to draw any parallel applicable to the present situation of this country. The theatre of war in America, was over an immense tract of territory, widely extended, thinly peopled, possessing no central point, no place particularly established as the seat

of government or power, having no vital, and few vulnerable parts. A province might be abandoned in consequence of one successful battle, but no object of importance was obtained. The enemy had only to retire to a distance, and unmolested to complete their preparations for a renewal of the attack. No victory could ever place under the hands of the conqueror, one-tenth, or even one-hundredth part of the country. If the Americans were routed, they had only to withdraw to some of the deserts with which the country abounded, and there wait six weeks or two months till they had an opportunity of renewing the contest with new prospects of advantage. Very different, however, would be the situation of this country if a landing of the enemy were effected. There are points where a landing might be effected within 60 miles of the metropolis. Every dictate of policy requires that, in such a case, we should be prepared to attack the enemy without a moment's delay, to harass not only by irregular troops, but to meet him in front, to hang on his flanks, to suffer him not to advance even a mile into the country, without encountering all that gallantry, combined with skill, can oppose to his progress. It does appear to me, therefore, that corps of volunteers in the maritime counties are best adapted for this service. It does appear to me, that in the remote counties the number of volunteers is not at all too extended. I trust, that if ever the enemy should land, the regular army will, assisted by the volunteers, be able to combat him with success, as soon as he has set a foot on our shores. But we ought to prepare even for the worst consequences. We ought to have a force ready to repair the loss sustained in the first conflicts with the enemy. An armed peasantry, I do not deny, might be rendered highly useful for some purposes; but it might be necessary to have a disposable, active, moveable, force, and independent of the volunteer system this could not be obtained. An armed peasantry within their own districts might be highly valuable. They would be, however, beyond that circle, useless as a disposable force. Their local knowledge might be converted to the utmost useful purposes, and their native courage might be so regulated as to give the most galling annoyance to the enemy. But it is necessary to oppose to such an enemy as we should have to encounter, as much regular discipline as possible.—In considering the army which Buonaparté will probably bring over with him, I certainly cannot flatter myself, that let any part of the invading army be composed of

the description of troops which have been alluded to, he certainly will not place any reliance upon his Italian and Dutch conscripts. He may amuse us with a newspaper account upon that subject; he may flatter his new and willing slaves with promising to let them partake in the expedition; but there is no doubt that he never will attempt the invasion of this country with any but a well-disciplined army. I hope and trust that very soon after their arrival, we should have a force collected, capable of driving them back into the sea; but even if we should not, we should at least be able so to balance the contest as to enable us to bring our regulars and volunteers from the interior. But I really do not think that a levy en masse, or as it is called, an armed peasantry, would be sufficient to stop the enemy, or could be brought to act with any prospect of success against him.—With regard to what has been said respecting the conduct of the Board of Admiralty, I do not mean now to enter into any discussion upon the subject. The apprehensions which I stated on a former night, were founded, in part, upon what I have seen; and partly upon public rumour. The apprehensions I entertain are, that the preparations which have been made, have not been sufficiently vigorous, compared with the nature of the enterprize of the enemy, and the novelty of the contest in which we are engaged. I shall, however, pursue my inquiries upon this subject, and if I find my apprehensions well-founded, I shall certainly submit them to the consideration of the House. It will be matter of great satisfaction to my mind if the noble lord at the head of the Admiralty can satisfactorily account for his conduct, because no man entertains a higher opinion of the transcendent merit of that noble lord than I do; but, nevertheless, I shall conceive it to be my duty, if, upon inquiry, I find my apprehensions are founded, to bring forward, and that at no very remote period, the subject under the consideration of Parliament.

Mr. Fox, in explanation, said that the right hon. gent. had mistaken his argument. He did not say that we should rely upon an armed peasantry alone, but an armed peasantry, acting in aid of a regular army.

Mr. Windham said, that the principles and opinions which he formerly professed upon this subject, he still retained. They were confirmed by experience, as far as experience had gone, and had now, in every point, the sanction of the very high authority (Col. Craufurd's) which the House had just heard. He was anxious to recall this fact

to the attention of the House, because it might serve to counteract the effect of the speech of his right hon. friend (Mr. Pitt), whose great powers of statement were very likely to have turned the House to a different view of the subject. Notwithstanding these powers, he must still think that his hon. friend was wrong, and that he was right. It was not true, what had been said by many, that he disparaged the volunteers. He did not disparage the volunteers, nor object to them individually, in any respect; what he condemned was the system on which they were formed, and the uses to which it was meant they should be applied; yet, with these objections full in his mind, he knew that such was the pressure of the immediate danger; and such the general deficiency of our military system, that no great part of it, however objectionable, could be given up at once, or ought so to be changed as to leave any considerable void in our means of defence even for a short time. He did not propose, or wish, therefore, that the volunteer force should be disbanded or greatly reduced; he doubted, in fact, whether by what he should recommend, it would be so much reduced as in the way about to be adopted; he wished it only to be put upon the footing on which it originally stood, or was supposed, at least, to stand by those who first engaged in it, namely, that of service free from any species of compulsion, but divested also of any inducements other than those which were furnished by mere zeal and patriotism. In this state, whatever good it did would be pure and unmixed. It would not operate, as it did at present, to the continued diminution of a force more valuable than itself; a force, which, if the present system continued, must be for ever growing less and less. Endeavours were made to show that the volunteer system did not produce this effect, but that the recruiting of the army was rather better than worse for it. The way in which this was made out was, as the House had heard, that by the military spirit which it infused, men were induced to enter into the army, who would not otherwise have thought of that mode of life. He would oppose to that the number of men, whatever it might be, who finding in themselves something of a military passion were satisfied to give it vent in corps of this description, and remain there when otherwise they might have gone further. It might possibly happen that neither number was very considerable; but he saw no reason to suppose that the last might not be as great as the former.—So much for the *assistance* which the volunteer corps were supposed to give to the recruiting. The *prejudice* they

occasioned was easily understood. In consequence of the number of exemptions, the lists were often exhausted, so that the recruiting of the army of reserve, the only source of recruiting now left for the line, in those instances stood still; and at all events sustained a great delay; the consequence of all which was, that the army of reserve had stopt at 36,000 instead of 50,000, and had little apparent probability of ever getting much further. But the principal mode in which the volunteer system operated to the prejudice of the army was by increasing the price of substitutes, and thereby bringing things to the state before alluded to, namely, that in which the army of reserve was the only channel by which recruits were received. This it did in four ways. First, it lessened the number of men liable to be ballotted, and thereby retarded, and in many instances absolutely prevented, the filling up the army of reserve. 2dly, it threw the ballot upon a class of men, less disposed, from their habit and situation, to serve in person, and producing therefore, in proportion to their numbers, a greater demand for substitutes. 3dly, it lessened the number of men, who would be willing to engage as substitutes, and 4thly, it placed those who might be willing so to engage, in a situation infinitely more advantageous for them in making their bargain. A man would engage as a substitute on very different terms when he had a ballot hanging over his head, and when he stood under the shelter of an exemption; as it might happen very well, that in the one case he would be willing to engage on moderate terms, and in the other not to engage at all. These, it must be presumed, were the causes which kept the amount of bounty at its present height. At least some causes there must be that kept it so; for there it was: and was not only as high as ever, but seemed, according to the phrase of the stock exchange, to be looking upwards.—With respect to the uses of the volunteers, he would not now enter upon them, so much having been already said on that subject, nor pursue the comparison between them and an armed peasantry. That an armed peasantry would be able to stop an army, he never had said at any moment; he had often, indeed, said the direct contrary; but then he must observe, that a body of volunteers, in the form at present proposed, would be equally incapable of stopping an army, and the attempt in the mean while of doing so, while equally unsuccessful, would be infinitely more fatal. The use of light troops, whatever might be their description, was to co-operate with an army, not to stand in lieu of it; the fault he

found with the present system was, that it was calculated with a view to the latter of these uses, namely, that of providing a sort of substitute for the army, and not for the former. It was in vain to say, that by training men for a more regular service you did not unfit them for what was irregular; that such kind of instruction would do them *no harm*. The inference might be true, if instruction were a thing to be had at no expense, with no sacrifice of time or of the means of acquiring what was more valuable. It would do men *no harm* as light troops, if they were all to be taught Arabick; yet he supposed no one would recommend or much approve that course of instruction. But it was not altogether true, indeed very much otherwise, as had been ably explained by his hon. friend (Col. Craufurd), that the sort of training, adopted for the volunteer, did no harm. It might do very material harm, and lead to the most serious mischiefs. It might well be doubted, whether even the sort of mixed training taught to the French army, though forced upon them by various considerations not generally applicable, and introduced in a form very different from that in which it was applied to our volunteers, would be found generally advantageous. But in another instance, which had been alluded to, and which more nearly resembled what we had to consider, viz. the light troops of the Austrian army, it was universally agreed, as he understood, by the Austrian officers speaking not only with great professional knowledge, but with actual experience of the thing, that the practice which had been introduced of giving to their light troops a degree of regular training had been injurious to them as light troops, and rendered them in fact considerably less valuable, in that respect than they had formerly been.—But whatever might be thought on this point, that is to say, whether any considerable portion of regular training might not prove even injurious to troops meant in the main to act as irregulars, this was certain, that to trust to irregulars as regulars must be pregnant with the most fatal dangers. It was, in our case, to renew the risk of that catastrophe which produced nothing less than the conquest of this country 800 years ago. It was by an action such as that now talked of, but with troops not so disproportioned probably in discipline and experience, that Harold lost his crown and his life, and that the kingdom passed under a foreign yoke. This truth ought to be for ever remembered, that by embodying troops, if you in some cases increased their chance of victory, you, to a certainty, exposed them

to greater defeat; and the great question to be decided was, whether from the nature of the troops and the time allowed for training of them, you were likely to gain more one way than you were to lose in the other.

Mr. *Dent* said a few words in condemnation of ministers, which we could not distinctly hear.—The question was then put, that the Speaker do now leave the Chair, which was carried without a division. Mr. Yorke in consideration of the lateness of the hour, proposed, that the committee should only proceed *pro forma*, and proceed to-morrow with the discussion of the subject. The House was resumed, and progress being reported, it was agreed that the committee should sit again on Thursday.—The other orders of the day were then deferred, and the House adjourned at two o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, March 1.

[MINUTES].—Counsel were finally heard relative to the Irish appeal, *Garde v. Burton*, viz. Mr. Mansfield, at considerable length, as counsel for the appellant in reply. After which their lordships adjourned the farther consideration till Monday se'nnight.—Mr. Alexander brought up from the Commons the Bank of Ireland Restriction Bill; and Mr. Vansittart presented the Greenland Whale Fishery Bill.—Lord Hawkesbury moved the first reading of the Bank of Ireland Restriction Bill, which proceeding accordingly took place, and subsequently for its being printed, which was also ordered.

[HIS MAJESTY'S INDISPOSITION.]—His lordship then moved, that the bill be read a second time on Monday next.—On this question being put,

Lord *King* rose, not, he said, for the purpose of opposing the motion of the noble Sec. of State, for he had no objection to deferring the discussion of the measure till that day; but he was induced, from the consideration of such a bill being before the House, and more especially by the circumstance of a bill of still greater importance being in its progress through the other House of Parliament, to require some information from ministers, relative to a subject of the greatest importance to that House and to the country. He alluded to the present state of the Sovereign's health; and he expressed his hope that in the present instance, the noble Sec. of State would be able to afford that consolatory information which was lately given in the other House of Parliament, by a person high in his Majesty's councils: what he meant was, the declaration, that no necessary suspension of the royal functions

existed. Information on this head was the more requisite from the authority of ministers, as the House had, as yet, no source of information, but that which it had in common with the public at large; namely, what it learned from the daily bulletins signed by four of the royal physicians; the information conveyed by these, he deemed neither sufficiently explicit nor satisfactory; the more so, as it was said that a fifth person of the medical profession attended on his Majesty, whose name he was rather surprised to observe was not subscribed in common with the others. He was glad to perceive several of his Majesty's ministers in their places, and in whose presence he called for the explanation alluded to, and he particularly had to address himself to the noble and learned lord on the woolsack, from whom he seemed to think full explanation on such a subject was more peculiarly, as from his high official capacity and relation to the Sovereign, involving in a deep, and he might say, awful responsibility, to be expected. Adverting again to the circumstance of the only channel through which the House had hitherto an opportunity of being informed upon this most important topic, he expressed the sense of duty he felt to call upon his Majesty's ministers for the desired explanation.

Lord *Hawkesbury* observed, that he could not conceive what regular or proper ground the noble lord could assume, on what might have taken place elsewhere, to put the question alluded to, to any particular peer in that House. However, the topic being mentioned, he had no hesitation to declare what gave him heart-felt consolation, and what he was sure must afford all their lordships, and the country at large, the greatest satisfaction; namely, that there existed at present no necessary suspension whatever of his Majesty's royal functions or authorities.—The question being then put on Lord *Hawkesbury's* motion,

Lord *Grenville* rose and spoke in substance as follows.—He considered the important measure of continuing the restriction on the Irish Bank, as intimately connected with the question put by the noble lord who sat near him (King), as the furtherance of such measures, and, indeed, of all measures necessarily supposed, that every part of the constitution was in full vigour. He was sure that every noble lord in the House, heard the noble Secretary's answer with the highest satisfaction, and every individual in the country must also feel the same satisfaction and the most lively gratitude to Providence, at the consoling intelligence, that the Sovereign whom all loved and revered, was again in a

situation to exercise his royal functions. It was well said, that the most awful responsibility rested upon ministers, in case of their misleading the public; but he could not believe, that they could possibly forget their duty to their country and their Sovereign so completely, as to forward any important measure, or give it the royal sanction, unless they were in possession of that confidence with his Majesty, which would enable them to obtain his consent and approbation, which alone gave any consequence to their official situation in the eyes of the public. The noble Sec. had said, that there was at present no suspension whatever of the royal functions. He would mention to the House how he understood this declaration. When, previous to this period, the public mind had been alarmed with the unwelcome accounts of his Majesty's illness, both Houses of Parliament had provided what was to be done on such an occasion, if such should in future occur. The state of convalescence of his Majesty, which would render any interference of Parliament unnecessary, was then settled to be at that particular point, when his Majesty should not be disabled, by his indisposition, from coming down to his Parliament. This was not the passing words of a speech or any opinion actually given, but it stood upon the records of Parliament. So far, then, the records of Parliament precluded all necessity of discussion upon the subject, and fixed the precise stage of indisposition, when the interference of the legislature became necessary. From the declaration which the noble Sec. of State had now made, we understand, with the settled rule of Parliament on this subject in view, that his Majesty was now completely restored to that degree of health and vigour, which enabled him to come to his Parliament, and in the exercise of the royal functions personally transact the business of the nation. Understanding the noble Sec. in this sense, and if his idea was wrong he wished to be corrected, he could not but most heartily partake in the high satisfaction which the House, and the nation in general, must feel at such an unexpected account of his Majesty's state of health. He rejoiced, that at this tremendous crisis, when we were menaced with a formidable invasion, our efforts were not likely to be damped by sorrow at the heavy calamity of our Sovereign's indisposition. He hoped no point of false delicacy had induced ministers to make this declaration, and that they would recollect, that while they performed their duty conscientiously to their Sovereign, they had also a duty to perform to the public. Heartily must their lordships, and the whole body

of the nation, thank the noble lord who had put the question in this House which had led to an answer so well calculated to spread joy and delight over this country. The subject was, no doubt, delicate, and none felt it more than he did; but, he would ill-understand his duty to the legislature and the public, and even to his Sovereign himself, who had proved, on many occasions, that the love of his people and their happiness, were dearer to him than life itself, who should allow any notion of false delicacy so far to weigh in his mind, as to carry on the usual business of the nation, and to transact the most important measures, with the knowledge, that there was, in fact, no executive government. He, therefore, highly approved of what the noble lord had done, and he would have been the last to approve of any discussion on such a subject, if he had not been convinced that it was demanded by a sense of duty to every part of the government and the nation. He had explained already what he understood by the answer which the noble Sec. of State had given to the noble Lord who sat near him. He had mentioned what the records of Parliament required on this subject, and this was the criterion by which he must judge of the declaration of his Majesty's state of health. He was satisfied that the noble Sec. had no intention to lead the legislature and the public into an error on this important point. If he were not satisfied on this head in his own mind, he could not agree that Parliament should proceed to any other business till the subject of his Majesty's indisposition was inquired into; but, understanding the noble Sec. in the sense to which he alluded, he most willingly gave his consent to the 2d reading of the Irish Bank Restriction Bill on Monday.

Lord King still expressed himself not altogether satisfied with regard to the answer given to his question. There was one circumstance, about which nothing had been said by the noble Sec. of State, that weighed considerably in his mind, which was this, that his Majesty was attended by a fifth physician, whose name did not appear on the face of the papers that were circulated relative to the indisposition of his Majesty, and his progress towards convalescence. It was certainly very material that the opinion of that fifth person should be procured and stated to the public along with that of the other four. What the noble Sec. had stated with respect to the question was probably founded on the authority of these four physicians; but the account could not be altogether satisfactory, unless the opinion of the

fifth physician who attended his Majesty, should be given, as it was impossible but conjectures must be spread concerning the reasons of withholding his sentiments from the public, that must, in a great measure, damp that satisfaction which the physicians now spread by their reports of his Majesty's recovery. He wished, therefore, that the noble Sec. would give some answer to that part of his question. It would also be satisfactory, if the noble and learned lord on the woolsack would confirm the statement which had been given, as the high situation which he held, as keeper of the Great Seal, rendered him more peculiarly and personally responsible.

Lord Hawkesbury said, that he thought there was no occasion for any further question on this subject. He stated the favourable account of his Majesty's health, upon what he considered as sufficient authority, and that was all that the House ought to require at present.

Lord Carlisle rose to request a more explicit answer to the question of his noble friend. It was of the highest importance that the nation should be satisfied that there was no misapprehension on this subject. The opinion of a fifth physician, who was in attendance upon his Majesty, afforded room for conjecture that medical men were not agreed in their sentiments respecting his Majesty's indisposition; this was a circumstance of the last importance, and certainly ought not to be withheld from the legislature and the public. To remove the apprehensions on this head, to satisfy the legislature that it was not proceeding with the business of the nation when there was no executive government, to satisfy the nation there was no intention to mislead them; he wished that some explicit answer should be given with respect to this point. He would therefore, request, that before the question was put, some of his Majesty's ministers would be so candid as to satisfy the House.

Lord Fitzwilliam followed on the same side. He urged the point that an explicit answer should be given to the question of the noble lord near him. He really wished, that the mystery which appeared to him to hang over the circumstance of a fifth physician attending his Majesty, whose name did not appear in the Bulletin, should be satisfactorily cleared up. If the opinion of that gent. was as favourable as that of the other physicians, why should it be withheld from the public? If it was not, the public had still a right to know what it was; it was a most flagrant breach of public duty in the ministers, if, from motives of false delicacy, or

any other motives, they took upon themselves to conceal from the nation that it had no executive government. If that was the fact, he wished, that, instead of clothing their communications on this subject in general terms, they would remove the public anxiety all at once by an explicit declaration upon this subject. These general sort of answers always left an impression that something was withheld material to the question. The ministers ought, therefore, to be more explicit and particular, in order that there might be no possibility of misunderstanding their words, and being led into error. This was a most awful moment, which required that the government should, in every point, be exercised with full vigour; and it was the highest injury that could possibly be done to the legislature and the nation, to keep them in doubt on a subject that so nearly concerned them. He admitted that this was a point of delicacy, and he could well conceive the critical situation in which ministers stood at present; but they had a duty to perform to the public, which ought to overcome every notion of false delicacy. He confessed his doubts had by no means been satisfied with regard to the indisposition of his Majesty, and it was, on this account, that he begged that the noble lord on the woolsack, or the noble Sec. would give a more particular answer to the last question of his noble friend.

The *Lord Chancellor* then rose. He had been personally alluded to, he observed, by the noble lord who had begun this discussion. He would assure the noble lord, that he was fully sensible of the responsibility that attached to himself in particular. He had considered, and that deeply, the duty which was incumbent upon him at this trying crisis. He was aware, that while he was, on the one hand, constantly to keep in view what was due from him, in point of delicacy to his Sovereign, he ought, on the other, never to forget that he had a duty to perform to the legislature and the public. He had settled in his own mind what line of conduct he was to pursue on this occasion, and kept that line exactly, which, in his own idea, appeared to be his duty. What the ideas of others might be on the same subject was another question. But he was anxious that there should be no misapprehension, and therefore, declared that the noble Sec. of State had correctly stated the convalescence of his Majesty. Delicate as this subject was, he would certainly not have mentioned this much, if he had not been compelled to it. But, as he had been compelled to it, he would state, that at this mo-

ment there was no suspension of the royal functions.

Lord *Carnarvon* said, he had heard of the delicacy of entering into any investigation on such a subject. Was this, however, a time to talk of delicacy, when, besides the alarm arising from the danger which menaced us from without, every person was struck with terror, lest a suspension had taken place of the functions of the executive government? He, for one did not understand such ideas of delicacy. If the Sovereign himself could be consulted, he would think it a mistaken delicacy indeed, by which the country was to be left, even for a moment, without a superintending hand. Such a delicacy would be equally false to his Majesty and to his successors, as it would be false to the people. It was of the last importance to take care that no minister should presume, even for a moment, to exercise the functions of royalty. Every step taken at such a period was an usurpation. Two bills of importance were at present before Parliament, into which he apprehended it would be impossible to enter without some evidence to satisfy Parliament on this head. He would ask his Majesty's ministers, whether they themselves had any knowledge as to the actual state of his Majesty's health? Whether they were in the daily habit of receiving marks of his personal confidence, and whether they had the usual access to his person? If these questions could not be answered in the affirmative, he must regard them merely as private individuals, no longer exercising an official situation. It was not enough that they should once have possessed his Majesty's confidence, if they were not at this moment in the enjoyment of it. On a former occasion, when a suspension of the exercise of the kingly functions was apprehended, physicians were examined before that House on the subject, and they were called on to act by similar evidence when any, the smallest interruption of the exercise of the royal functions took place. He had heard a great deal about responsibility. He knew of no such term. The national security was what they were now called on to guard, nor were they warranted to entrust so sacred a pledge to the responsibility of any individual, or of any set of men, however respectable they might be. A parish minister, or any subordinate character, by taking on himself the weight of state affairs, would unquestionably increase his own responsibility, but would the public security be increased in an equal degree?—The question was again about to be put, when

Lord Grenville again rose, and observed, that if the noble and learned lord had given an answer to the noble lord who sat near him, it would have been still more satisfactory. The learned lord had said, that he was anxious that there should be no misapprehension. In order to prevent this, it would be for him to say whether he understood him right, when he considered the declaration then made as corresponding with the rule laid down in the records of Parliament, on which his hand then rested. In that rule it appeared that the particular point at which the interference of Parliament should be considered as necessary, was, when his Majesty was in such a state as precluded his coming down to his Parliament, and transacting the business of the nation. When the minds of the public were filled with grief and alarm, at the indisposition of his Majesty at two former periods, this rule had been adopted and written in the Parliamentary Records, in order to form a guide to the legislature and the ministers how they were to act in the event of such a case happening again. What, therefore, he understood, by the declaration which had been made, was, that his Majesty was in such a state of health, and possessed of all the faculties necessary for the discharge of the royal functions, that he was not prevented from coming down to Parliament, and transacting the business of the nation. In order, then, to prevent all misunderstanding, he would wish that the noble and learned lord would inform him, whether the sense in which he understood the answer which had been given was correct. When the nation was, on two former occasions, filled with sorrow, at an event similar to the present, the noble and learned lord who then sat on the woolsack, had satisfied the House, by declaring that he had waited on his Majesty in person, and on his own authority and observation declared to the House, that his Majesty was in a situation capable of discharging the functions of government. At a subsequent period, another noble lord, who then sat on the woolsack, had affixed his seal to a commission for passing bills in that House, which was one of the most important functions of government; thereby making himself personally responsible for the capability of his Majesty to discharge those very functions; and this was the very act which diffused joy and satisfaction over the nation at that time. He would, therefore, wish some explicit declaration were made by the learned lord, whether his idea of what had been said, in answer to his noble friend, was just?

The Lord Chancellor said, that from that

attachment and duty which he owed to his Majesty, no consideration should make him swerve so far, as to make him go into what he conceived an unnecessary and improper explanation. At the time of passing the resolution to which the noble lord pointed, the two Houses of Parliament were about to exercise a very uncommon act of power, to the due and ordinary discharge of which, the concurrence of his Majesty was, by the constitution of this country, essential. The best answer, therefore, which he could make to the question put by the noble lord, so as to evince his conviction of the state of his Majesty's health, was, that, if a similar act were now in agitation, and he were called on to affix the seal to it, he should think himself guilty of a breach of his duty in so doing, under the present circumstances, without first having an interview with his Majesty, and requesting to know his royal will on the subject. This was all he had to say, and no consideration whatever should induce him to say anything further on the subject at present.—The question was then put, and the bill ordered to be read a second time on Monday.

Lord Grenville said, that the words of the noble lord on the woolsack, so far from proving satisfactory to him, convinced him of the necessity of some further conversation on the subject, before the second reading of the bill on Monday.

[BANK AND PRIVATE PAPER.] — Lord Grenville called the attention of the House to a subject on which he had on former occasions given notice of his intention to bring forward a motion. He alluded to the enormous paper circulation of the country: on this important topic he should probably take the opportunity which the second reading of the Bank of Ireland bill would afford, to deliver his sentiments. After expatiating generally upon the subject, as connected with the general defence of the country, and in other points of view, he observed it was unnecessary to point out the propriety of having every practical information upon the subject. In that view, he should now move for the production of an Account of all cash, bank and private paper, received in their official capacities, by the receivers general of the land-tax for the year ending the 5th of Jan. 1804. His lordship then moved accordingly, and that the quantities of cash, bank, and private paper, should be distinctly set forth, as well as the quantity received, within certain given periods in the course of the year.

Lord Hawkesbury observed, that he should be under the necessity of opposing the mo-

tion made by the noble lord on two grounds ; 1st, it did not appear to him likely to produce the information sought for. The production of these papers, if obtained, would be a very imperfect criterion of the respective proportion of cash, bank notes, and private paper now in circulation, and, therefore, the motion appeared inadequate to its own purpose. At the same time, an order of this kind, issuing from government, would create great apprehension throughout the kingdom, and might occasion a great run on private banks. On the subject now before the House, namely, the Irish bank restriction bill, it could not be necessary. There was, indeed, another subject of which the noble lord had given notice (an inquiry into the circulation of private paper in England), to which it might have some reference, but, before the motion could be agreed to, it would be necessary to consider, whether the inquiry to which it led, was or was not expedient at the present juncture. Whatever might be its utility at any other period, his lordship was convinced, that at this period it could have no beneficial purpose ; and when the inquiry should be moved for, he had no doubt he should be prepared to meet the noble lord on that subject. Such being his opinion, he conceived the motion either useless or injurious, and therefore should be under the necessity of opposing it.

Lord Grenville expressed his surprise that the noble lord should so confidently pronounce on the inferences which he might attempt to draw from the accounts he had moved for ; and it was the first time he had heard the production of papers opposed, which tended to give information to that House, because his Majesty's ministers did not draw the same conclusion from them which was sought to be established by the mover. Equally astonished was he, that when the question was on the propriety or impropriety of continuing the restriction on the Bank of Ireland, which necessarily involved the consideration of the comparative issue of paper in both countries, that his Majesty's ministers should refuse the House a document so necessary to the full and just investigation of the subject before them. As to the noble lord's disapprobation of bringing forward the motion of which he had given notice previous to the recess, that surely would have no tendency on the present question. His lordship's arguments on the occasion seemed to be, "I will not let the House have documents on a point immediately before them, because these documents may have some bearing on an inquiry of which I disapprove, and which may hereafter be moved

for." With respect to the alarm throughout the country, referred to by the noble lord, his lordship said he wished to put it fairly and directly to the hearts of their lordships, whether any thing would create so injurious an alarm, as the notion that our danger was so great, that the House of Lords was fearful of looking it full in the face. He, on the contrary, would seek safety in a different mode of conduct. He would examine our situation in all its dependencies and not shrink from the inquiry with timid apprehensions that the country was unequal to its trial. This direct and open mode of proceeding was the only one that could inspire solid confidence. Let ministers recollect what might soon be our state. Supposing an invasion actually had taken place, the soldiers that were to repel it must be paid in cash. Was it therefore needless or too early to enter on an inquiry that would ascertain what dependence we could have on that fund which was to constitute the source of our security ? If half the taxes were paid in cash, that would be sufficient for all necessary purposes. If less than half, and the rest in bank notes, then it would behove the legislature to advert to the security of the Bank, and should any considerable proportion be paid in private paper (and his lordship was convinced that more than half was) then would it seriously concern the government of the country to adopt some measure that might extend to private paper a kind of common security. If the taxes were in a great proportion paid in private bills, let the House consider what must become of the public income, in case the enemy effect a landing. Wherever they touch, all the property in that district must fall. It was, therefore, with the utmost astonishment that he heard one of his Majesty's ministers deprecate the inquiry which led to the consideration of a remedy to an evil of such important magnitude.

Lord Hawkesbury alleged that the noble lord had mistaken his meaning from beginning to end. He had not spoken of any inference from the accounts, but only said, that they would not establish the facts required, and were therefore useless. For the 2d point, he had only meant that the documents being useful on another inquiry, the expediency of that inquiry should first be determined, before they were granted, as the production of them might create much trouble and alarm. Though the accounts might have been useful on the first passing of the bill, yet as, whatever was the original policy of that measure, it was not intimated that any doubt existed on the propriety of continuing

it, he could not think them then needful, in the investigation of that subject. As to the proposed inquiry of the noble lord, he hoped he should convince the House, when the motion came forward, that his lordship's facts were mistaken, and his apprehensions needless. Certain he was, that the proposed inquiry would lead to no good at this time.

Lord *Carnarvon* supported the motion, and strenuously followed the line of observation taken before Lord *Grenville*.

Lord *Hobart* defended his noble colleague and friend, and seemed to conceive the argument would end, upon his observing, that it was impossible to produce the accounts before the 2d reading of the bill on Monday, and that the termination of the act would admit of no further delay.

Lord *Grenville* said, the noble lord would have spared himself that observation had he looked at the title of the bill. In fact it had six weeks to continue.

The Lord *Chancellor* professed some doubt, whether the accounts would, if produced, ascertain the facts required. The great mischief of private paper arose, in his opinion, from the pernicious practice of fictitious credit, and accommodation bills. The practice in this case was for a set of gentlemen to distribute themselves in different parts of the country; they then connected themselves with a corresponding set of acquaintances in London, and commenced undertakings, by drawing bills on each other. The evils of this practice were great, and never should have been permitted to exist. As it was established, he was aware it could not be abolished without serious evil, but he thought it the duty of the legislature to inquire, whether the evil of its removal was not preferable to the evil of its existence? It was surely too much to permit the circulation of bills drawn for value received, on persons who had no effects. As to the immediate subject, he doubted, whether, should the bill continue six weeks, it would be time enough to procure the returns from the receivers-general. He also conceived it would not be in their power to make them out. All they received was put indiscriminately into a common mass, and was sent to London through the medium of private bills; he, therefore, could not see what purpose the motion could possibly answer.

Earl *Spencer* thought the observations made by his noble friend (Lord *Grenville*) were not sufficiently answered by the noble lord opposite him. His noble friend had expressly stated, that the accounts moved for might not be perfect, but that they were the best facts that could be obtained on the

subject; and this the noble lord opposite did not attempt to disprove, and certainly had not pointed out where better could be obtained. His lordship thought, considering how widely spread and general these accounts would be, that they would constitute a very good criterion of the facts. He was surprised the noble lord should object to the motion on the ground of disseminating alarm, and wished purposely to enter his protest against any such doctrine as that of withholding information from the House on motives of that nature. He also objected to his lordship's argument which referred to the notice given by his noble friend. Whatever his lordship might think on that subject, when brought forward, it could be no ground of discussion now. As the motives assigned by the noble lord for dissenting from the motion were, in his mind, insufficient, he, of course, should give it the support he thought it entitled to.

Lord *Hobart* said, on enquiry, he understood the bill did expire the 20th inst. as he first mentioned, and did not subsist six weeks longer.

The Lord *Chancellor* said, he rather believed that was the case, as months in acts of Parliament were reckoned by lunar, and not calendar months, which made the difference.—The question was then put, and negatived without a division.—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, March 1.

The adjourned ballot for a committee to try the merits of a petition, complaining of an undue election for Coventry, stood for this day, but there being only 83 members present at four o'clock, an adjournment of course took place till to-morrow.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, March 2.

The bill for prohibiting the exportation of seed corn for a limited time, was read a second time, and committed for Monday next.—The several private bills before their lordships were passed in their respective stages.—Lord Viscount Carleton and the Earl of Macclesfield presented two petitions, which were ordered to be laid on the table.—Several witnesses were sworn to give evidence on certain private bills in progress through the House, and the oaths of allegiance were taken by an alien, Daniel Boileau, previous to the 2d reading of his naturalization bill.—The bill was afterwards read a second time, and ordered to be referred to the consideration of a private committee.—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, March 2.

[MINUTES.]—The Speaker having taken the chair, the House proceeded to ballot for a committee to consider the merits of the Coventry petition, complaining of an undue election, when the following members were chosen: Sir J. C. Hippisley, Bart.; C. Adams, Esq.; R. Dawson, Esq.; Visc. Fitzharris; Sir G. Heathcote, Bart.; Sir E. Hartopp, Bart.; Lord Porchester; Hon. W. Stewart; W. Moffatt, Esq.; M. Wood, Esq.; W. Northey, Esq.; J. Buller, Esq.; Sir R. Barclay, Bart.—Nominees, W. Praed; P. Francis, Esqrs. Who being duly sworn, proceeded forthwith to their committee room.—Ordered on the motion of Sir G. Cornwall, that the minutes of the proceedings before the Aylesbury committee be printed.—Mr. W. Dundas obtained leave to bring in a bill for the better paving, cleansing, and lighting the city of Edinburgh.—Read a second time and committed, the East-India Dock Bill, and the Scotch Bankrupt Law Bill.—Sir John William Anderson obtained leave to bring in a bill for the better Assessment and Collection of the Poor Rates in the parish of Stratford-le-Bow.

[IRISH SALARIES AT PAR.]—Lord *Archibald Hamilton* rose, and observed, that he did expect, in consequence of what had fallen in the course of discussion, a few nights since, that some account would have been laid before the House, respecting the remittances of salaries to the officers belonging to the Irish government resident in England at par, notwithstanding the great differences of exchange which have, since the union, continued to increase as against Ireland. Not seeing, however, any disposition to produce such an account, he felt it his duty to move, "That there be laid before the House, an account of the remittances made from the Irish government to their officers, resident in this country, since the union, and paid to them at par, with the dates of such remittances and payment, and copies of the orders for such remittances."

Mr. *Corry* said, if the noble lord had not moved for the account now stated, he would himself have felt it his duty to have made the motion. On the matter having been mentioned by the noble lord a few nights since, no person could be more solicitous than he was to have it fully explained; and indeed, he had already framed a motion on the subject, which he meant to have made, had his intention not been anticipated by the noble lord. If the noble lord wished to have, in minute detail, the precise sums

paid to every minor officer of the Irish government resident here, with the several dates of payment attached, he had no objection to lay it before the House; but, possibly, it might answer the noble lord's purpose as well, to have the total sums remitted at each period, as paid at par. The motion which he had framed, and which he would have cheerfully submitted to the noble lord, had he asked him in private, would have gone much further than the noble lord's motion, for it would have required, in addition, the existing rate of exchange on the date of each remittance, and the exceeding above par on each, which would ascertain at once the precise object of the noble lord, and save gentlemen the trouble of a tedious calculation. If the noble lord had no objection to adopt this motion, instead of the one he had proposed, he was welcome to accept it.

Lord *Archibald Hamilton* thanked the right hon. gent., and could have no objection to adopt that shape he had given to the motion; but observed, that it omitted a principal point which he wished to learn, namely, the orders by which such remittances were made.

Mr. *Corry* declared himself willing to accede, adding, that no such order was made except by the Treasury of Ireland, or the Chancellor of the Exchequer, by whom the payments to minor officers here were made in checks on the Bank.

Lord *Folkestone* understood, that payments were made to officers resident in Ireland at par, and, therefore, he wished to add, by way of amendment to the motion, the words, "in or," before the words, "from Ireland."—Agreed to. Upon which the motion passed in this shape, and the account was accordingly ordered.

[MILITARY OFFICERS' INCOME TAX.]—Earl *Temple* rose, in consequence of what he had mentioned on a former night, respecting the assessment of income tax upon the officers of certain regiments in the district where he resided, in a mode, which, it seemed, had the sanction of his Majesty's Attorney-General; and he meant now to give notice of his intention to bring forward, at a future day, a motion, in some shape, from the discussion of which he should hope to induce the House to exempt subaltern officers from that tax altogether; but which motion he should precede by another, for an account of the amount of the sums levied under the income tax bill, upon officers of the army and militia, up to the 5th of Nov. so far as the same could be made up. He did not mean to be particular in specifying each regiment, but the gross amount.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, if the noble lord had only thought fit to ask the question across the House, or in private of him, there could be no objection to satisfy his curiosity; but since he had avowed his object, and the purpose to which he intended to apply the information, he thought the motion of too much importance to be granted as a motion of course, without previous notice.

Earl *Temple* said, he did not intrude the motion now; he only meant to give notice of bringing it forward on Wednesday next.

[*IRISH EXCHANGE AND CURRENCY.*]—Mr. *Foster* rose, and said, that he had given notice a few days ago of his intention to bring forward, this day, a motion for a Committee, to inquire into the causes of the present exorbitant state of the exchange between Ireland and this country, as against the former, and he now meant to perform his promise; and when the House should consider that the rate of exchange at this moment, between Dublin and London, was no less than 18½ per cent. being 10 per cent. above the ordinary rate, which is 8 1-3d per centum, he trusted it was a circumstance sufficiently important to induce the House to take the subject into its mature consideration. The House would have, he was sure, the goodness to reflect, that Ireland was now consolidated with England, in all respects, and bore her quota in the public burthens of the empire; yet her intercourse with this country stood charged with this most severe and oppressive burthen, while the intercourse between the capital and Scotland, and all other parts of the kingdom much more distant from the imperial capital than Dublin, were charged with no such imposts at all. The burthen was not merely confined to the commercial intercourse between the countries, but extended itself to the Irish subject, who came here either to attend his parliamentary duty, or in search of justice to the dernier resort—a grievance attaching upon no other subject from any part of the empire. The evil must flow from some causes which pressingly called for investigation. He did not mean now to go at large into the subject, but merely to touch upon the general topics to which the evil had been attributed. Amongst others, the balance of trade had been a cause assigned. That, he would admit, was certainly one of the obvious causes; for, during a space of twenty years previous to 1800, the balance of exports, between Ireland and this country, was, upon an average, in favour of the

former, by above a million a year. In that year, a considerable change took place, by which the balance changed two millions against Ireland. In the next year it was 1,600,000l., in the next above a million, and has so continued, and is likely still to continue increasing every year. Another of the causes, and a still more prominent one, which he had taken the liberty of stating a few nights since, was the annual remittances to this country of 1,300,000l. to pay the interests of loans, borrowed in this country, for the use of the Irish government, and the remittances of rent to Irish absentee landlords, which by many had been confidently stated at three millions, but which, he believed, would be more correctly estimated at two millions. The only account to balance this, was the remittance of two millions annually, to defray the expenses of government in Ireland, which left a balance against that country of 1,300,000l. In an arrangement upon this head, it would be of importance to know well the value of bullion in exchange between any two nations, because this must always materially affect the rate of exchange between them. Now in Ireland, at this moment, and for a considerable time past, the price of guineas, in exchange for their current value in paper, is 2s. 4d. to 2s. 6d. per guinea, which was actually paid by some gentlemen of his acquaintance, for remittance to this country. Such a state of the difference between bank paper and bullion, in the capital of Ireland, was a lamentable instance of the difference of exchange, and urgently pointed to the necessity of investigation, in order, if possible, to derive some remedy. Various causes had been assigned for the evil, but they were all reduceable to one, namely, the restriction upon the payment in specie by the Bank. Add to this, an effect which arose out of it; namely, the demand for guineas by the manufacturers of the north, which obliged their employers to obtain guineas for them at any rate, and thus raised the price of them 10 per cent. Another cause stated by an hon. gent. the other night (Sir John Newport), was the prevalent disposition to hoarding of guineas, in the three other provinces, which, he was very ready to admit, operated in no inconsiderable degree to the disappearance of gold. But, whatever were the causes altogether, the lamentable result was, that the whole bank paper of the country stood this moment at a depreciation of 10 per cent. Whether paper was or was not depreciated in value, was very easy to be ascertained. When paper was convertible into gold of equal value, it

was not depreciated, but now when it was necessary to give more than 2s. 4d. premium for a guinea, it was obvious that the paper was at a depreciation of 10 per cent. And he begged the House to consider what must be the situation of a country whose paper was at such a depreciation!—There was another cause to which the evil by some was imputed, namely, the excessive issue of paper from the Bank. Whether this was the cause he would not determine, but he had no doubt but that there was an over-issue, seeing, it was well known, that, at the time it was thought necessary to restrain the cash issues of the Bank of Ireland, the amount of their paper extant was only 600,000l., and that the sum of their paper extant, by their last returns, was 2,600,000l. of which one million was in notes under 5l. There was every probability that this quantity must continue to increase, as it was well known, that the paper of the Bank of Ireland was the stock upon which all the private banks in the kingdom traded; and, in proportion to the quantity of the national bank paper the private banker was able to get into his possession, he was enabled to issue his own paper (which he was bound to pay in national bank paper), to a much more considerable amount; according to the principle of banking stated by some writers, in the ratio of three pounds for one, so that the greater the number of private bankers, and the more they increase their trade, the greater becomes the source of issue for bank paper, and for the increase of any evil of which it may be the cause.—Another cause that might operate, was the supposed insecurity of the country. He was not inclined, however, to think that the state of the country had much effect in producing this very unfavourable state of exchange. No man, he said, ever presumed to call in question the undoubted validity of the national bank of Ireland; therefore, no inconvenience was ultimately to be apprehended from any portion of the paper which it would think fit to issue. Of the excessive issue of bank paper, there were few who entertained a doubt; and that this might be a very prominent cause of the evil complained of, was not problematical. — Now, with respect to the remedy, he should think there was one simple one, which, if it could, under the wisdom of the legislature, be accomplished, would prove at once most effectual. It was the establishment of one common circulating medium through both countries. There was another point which had not yet been touched on by any person in the course of those discussions which had already taken place on

this subject, and to which he now begged leave to call the attention of the House. In the commercial intercourse between this country and Scotland, and almost every other branch of the empire, save Ireland, there were two species of circulating medium equally current; namely, gold, and the Bank of England notes. When the issues of gold were restricted, the currency of the notes continued, with little or no inconvenience to the commerce between the countries. But, between Ireland and this country, there was but one current circulating medium—Gold; and the moment that was restrained, the medium was taken away; for, in Ireland, the notes of the Bank of England did not currently run; so that Ireland, to make her remittances an adequate substitute for gold, deals at a certain loss upon her commerce of 10 per cent.—There was another point too, which was highly desirable to be accomplished, though it might have little or no effect upon the rates of exchange, namely, an equalisation of the currency in both countries.—There was also, another consideration materially necessary for the attention of Parliament, in looking to the future situation of Ireland, and providing, in time, a remedy for a mischief, which must, otherwise, be attended with disastrous consequences to the credit of that country. There is at present a balance against Ireland in favour of this country, of 1,300,000l. per annum, being the remittances to pay the English holders of Irish stock for loans, borrowed for the use of government in Ireland. This was a burthen of itself alone more than the trade of Ireland was able to bear. While the present system should continue to go on, and the sums borrowed so greatly exceeded the annual interest paid, it might not be so palpably felt in that country; but, whenever the day should come for establishing a sure system of finance to raise the necessary supplies by taxes within the year, it would not fail to be severely felt; and, therefore, prudence should dictate the necessity of providing a remedy in time, by endeavouring to do away, under some permanent system, the enormous difference of exchange, which had been increasing every year since the establishment of the union.—He had mentioned, on a former night, the wretched state to which the current coin of Ireland had been reduced. There was scarcely any thing in the shape of money to be seen, but a miserable coinage of adulterated copper and of counterfeit shillings, so bad, that for a pound Bank note, even at its depreciated value, 26 or 27 of such shillings would be given in exchange.—Not wishing at present

to detain the House longer, he trusted he had stated enough to show the necessity for investigation; and he trusted that the House, in its collective wisdom, would be able to devise some effectual remedy for the evils of which the complaints were so just and general. — Mr. Foster concluded by moving, "That a Committee be appointed to inquire into the causes of the present high rate of Exchange between Great Britain and Ireland, and the state of the currency in the latter kingdom: and to report the same to the House."

Mr. Brogden rose, not to oppose the motion of the right hon. gent., to which he had no objection, but to state shortly his own opinion, that the true causes of the evil complained against, were not those stated by the right hon. gent., but consisted radically in the disturbed state of Ireland, which operated to depress the exports of Ireland in so material a degree for the last few years, as to create a considerable balance of trade against her. This, of course, rendered the number of merchants in Dublin, who could draw upon London, much fewer; and those of London, who could draw on Dublin, much more numerous in proportion; and the natural consequence of a paucity or redundancy of such bills at market, raised or depressed the rate of exchange.

Mr. George Ponsonby said, that as the hon. gent. had not expressed any intention of opposing the motion, it was not, perhaps, necessary to make any observation upon what he had said, but he thought the hon. gent. might as well have reserved his observations till the Committee went into the inquiry which was proposed. What had been said about exchange might be perfectly true, when the exchange between the two countries was real; but it was well known, that there was a nominal as well as a real exchange, and that ought always to be borne in mind when this subject was discussed. The subject he was convinced was deserving of consideration.—With regard to the distress that prevailed in Ireland on account of the state of the circulation, he was sure no man who had not been in that country could form a just conception of it from any description, however accurate. There was not to be found in the country parts of Ireland, except in the North, any description of coin whatsoever, except some very bad copper; silver and gold there were none. But as something must be used for circulation, there were many persons who, without any capital whatsoever, set up a kind of banking shops, and issued notes of 6d., of 1s., and a note for 3s. 6d. was considered as a very large one!

The difficulties and inconvenience which this occasioned to the higher classes of society were very great indeed, but infinitely more so to the lower classes. In the course of his professional experience in the Courts of Justice, he had witnessed the trials of many of those bankers who had become bankrupts, and the lamentable consequences to those who had become sufferers by their insolvency.—He had himself paid, last Saturday at Dublin, 2s 4d. each for guineas, to bear his expenses hither on his parliamentary duty, and if he had chosen English bank notes he must have paid a still higher premium in proportion.—To an inquiry so reasonable as that proposed by the right hon. gent. who made the motion, he did not expect to hear any preliminary objections, such as those made by the hon. member who spoke last: he thought that any such objections would come much more orderly in the Committee which he did not seem inclined to oppose. Whether in that Committee a competent remedy could be suggested, was another matter; but, surely, the inquiry ought to be made, by which the House would manifest its attention to the grievance and its wish to redress, if redress should appear practicable; and so far the anxiety of the public mind would be consoled upon the subject.

Mr. Corry said, he rose, by no means to offer the smallest opposition to the motion of the right hon. gent.; a motion, the principle of which had already been acceded to by some of his friends round him. He did not, however, wish to be understood as meaning to express any conviction that it would produce any practical benefit, which would remedy the evil which was complained of. If the inquiry should be productive of any beneficial consequences, it would give him the most sincere satisfaction, and even if it should fail of the desired end, it might have this effect, that it would prove to the public the truth of the opinion which had been delivered by the best informed men upon this subject, viz., that for the evil of exchange there was no remedy in the power of Parliament. It would set the public mind at rest upon the subject, and the House would have discharged its duty with attention and with due regard to the interest of the people of Ireland. Every body would be satisfied with the degree of alleviation, if not of remedy, which this might produce, or they would be convinced, after full inquiry, that it was not possible to do any thing upon the subject.—With regard to the circulation of Ireland, the House would bear in recollection, that this subject had not escaped the

attention of ministers. It had been repeatedly adverted to in the last session, and in the session before. In the last session an act was passed to prohibit the circulation of what was called silver notes in Ireland, from the 1st of Jan. 1804. The propriety of that act was at that time doubted, and as many Irish members were prevented from attending Parliament by their military duties, an act was passed at the commencement of this session to suspend the operation of that act for six months; so that it appeared that the statement of the right hon. gent. though true, had not escaped the attention of his Majesty's ministers. With regard to the state of exchange between Great Britain and Ireland, when it appeared that the balance of exchange was in favour of Ireland in those parts of that country where gold was in circulation, and that it was against Dublin, where there was only paper in circulation, the quantity of paper issued must be looked upon as one of the causes of the depreciation of paper. But besides this, there was, he was convinced a very considerable degree of management on the subject of exchange. When the treasury of Ireland ceased to draw upon this country for the amount of the loan, it was observable that the exchange rose considerably in four or five days. There were violent fluctuations of 2, 3, and even 4 per cent. He had, therefore, no doubt, but that a very considerable degree of management was used in creating these violent fluctuations of exchange, which were so advantageous to individuals.—With regard to what had been said on the subject of remittances, there was one species of remittance from Ireland which had not been alluded to. The loan remitted from this country to Ireland certainly affected the immediate balance; but the fact was, that the expenditure in Ireland was greater than its contribution to the joint expenditure of the United Kingdom. The consequence of that was, that very considerable sums were remitted to that country, and that was one reason why Ireland had been better able to go on than she otherwise would have done.—There was one subject adverted to by the right hon. gent. who had made the motion, upon which he could by no means agree with him. The right hon. gent. in stating the balance of trade to be against Ireland, had argued entirely upon what was called the official value, but it was perfectly well known that the official value was very considerably below the real value. It was certainly true, that if gentlemen were guided by the official value of the exports, the balance of trade would appear to be against Ireland, whereas,

if they looked to the real value of the article exported, which certainly was the only true way of knowing whether the balance was for or against a country, the balance would appear to be in favour of Ireland. To illustrate this point, he would mention one or two instances. It was perfectly well known that the second great article of export from Ireland was provisions. The barrel of beef exported from Ireland was valued in the official books at 16s. per cwt. whereas, in fact, the real value, that is to say, the real price at which it was exported was 25, 30, and even 40s. per cwt. In estimating the amount of the exports of a country, it was necessary to look to the real value, because that was the amount of the money that came into the country as the price of the article. With regard to pork, which was perfectly well known to be another great article of export from Ireland, the official value was 19s. per cwt., whereas the real price at which it was exported, was 30, 33, and even sometimes up to 65s. per cwt. Butter, which was another great article of export, was stated according to official value at 42s. per cwt., whereas, in point of fact, it was exported at 70, 80, and even 105 per cwt. It was, therefore, a very unfair means of ascertaining the trade of a country to look merely to official value. It was true, that the real value of the imports was greater than the official value, but not in so great a degree as in the exports. Therefore Ireland was by no means in the desperate situation which had been represented by some gentlemen. However, as he had stated before, he should not oppose the motion, and it would give him the most lively satisfaction if it produced any beneficial effects.

Mr. Foster said, that the observations which the right hon. gent. had made as to the difference between the real and the official value of the exports did not apply, because, in the calculation he had made, he had taken the official value both of imports and exports. He knew very well that there was a great difference between real and official value, because the cattle that were exported from Ireland to England, were valued in Ireland at 12l. per head, but when they came to England their official value was fixed at 6l., so that it might be supposed they lost one half of their value by sea-sickness on their passage!

Mr. Corry said, he had before stated, that although there was a difference between the real and official value of imports, it was by no means so great as the difference between the real and the official value of the exports.

Lord Henry Petty rose only to say a few

words. He felt considerable satisfaction at the candid manner in which the subject had been brought forward and met by the right hon. gent. opposite. He could not omit this opportunity of adverting to an evil which was admitted on all hands to exist, and which passing under the eye of his Majesty's ministers in Ireland, might be the more effectually remedied. He alluded to the excessive issue of country Bank paper. He should himself be the last to recommend any vigorous measures to restrain the operations of the private bankers, but he could not be persuaded of the propriety of forcing their paper into circulation. He understood that the military forces in Ireland were paid altogether in the paper of the country banks, and that an improper, he had almost said a corrupt connexion, existed between the agents employed in paying the military and yeomanry, and the bankers. As soon as these agents receive their remittances, they lodge them in the country bank, taking their paper in exchange for paying the forces, and the noble lord agreed that the Bank of Ireland paper became thus an additional capital to the country banker. In such a state of the country, he looked upon investigation, to the end of devising some remedy, as absolutely indispensable. Unhappy, indeed, must that situation of a country be, which affords to the fraudulent an opportunity of deluding the unwary, and to the strong the means of oppressing the weak.—He had but one observation more to make. Though no objection had been made by the right hon. gent. (Mr. Corry), he had thrown out, that little was to be expected from the enquiry. If ever there was a subject which deserved the serious and effectual interference of the Legislature, it was the present. The evil was universally admitted. Though remedies had been mentioned out of doors, there however existed a difference of opinion with respect to them, and the noble lord thought that the best mode of coming to some agreement, with respect to the remedy of an evil universally allowed to exist, was to appoint the committee, and institute an open inquiry which would lead to a discovery of the best means of redress.

Lord Castlereagh said, that no person could regret more than he did the unfortunate state of exchange in Ireland, and the depreciation of its paper currency. He was glad, therefore, that such a motion had been brought forward, but did not know that any measure that was applied with effect to the evil that was on all sides admitted. He could not help thinking, however, that we were apt to attach more evil to the circulation of

paper than it really would admit; and that the issues, however excessive they might be supposed, could not, without other causes, account for the present state of exchange. The great disparity between gold and silver was certainly allowed; but the difficulty was to preserve the gold in circulation where every person was so eager to hoard. The state of the two countries was extremely different. In this country no person would lose a bargain by insisting on payment in gold; but in Ireland, in many parts of it at least, there was no buying without gold. He would willingly second any measure that could promise a rational hope of producing greater confidence in the paper circulation, which was so necessary to the interests of the country.

Mr. Dick was of opinion, that not only those discussions that were instituted in this House, but the speculations that were circulated through every part of the country, were extremely disadvantageous, and had a tendency to augment the evil they meant to remedy. There seemed to him to be a kind of prejudice entertained against the Bank of Ireland, which he was sure was very ill-founded. The directors of the Bank of Ireland had been attacked both in and out of that House: he had seen a pamphlet, written by a noble lord (King), not a member of that House, which contained a most violent, unwarrantable, and unsuccessful attack upon that most respectable body of men, and the ground of attack was the great issue of paper. He did not wish to occupy the attention of the House; but he was anxious to offer an observation that had occurred to him in regard to the subject now in discussion. To the Bank of Ireland no particular circumstances had occurred since the year 1797 that could affect their interests, but the restriction of their issues in specie. Since that restriction had taken place, however, some circulating medium became absolutely necessary, and the effects of this new circulating medium were various. Since that event, in particular, they had increased their capital to a very great degree. The situation of the country was such, the hon. gent. thought, that nothing but the restoration of tranquillity, and the gallantry of this country toward Ireland in money transactions, could effectually remedy those evils that were complained of.

Sir John Newport was of opinion also, that nothing could be more unfavourable to the state of exchange that was so much complained of, than the discussions that took place in the House, which had a tendency to excite hopes that could not be realized, and

to expose grievances that did not admit of redress. The low rate of exchange, so unfavourable to Ireland, though owing much, he thought, to the present insecurity of that country, or, which was equally the same, to what might be thought its present insecurity, would be found to arise also from a number of other causes. To remedy those evils, however, he did not think it in the power of the legislative authority, and in many instances incompetent with the legal exercise of that authority. If the state of exchange between this country and Hamburg, or any other country in similar circumstances, was deemed an improper subject of legislative interference, he could see no reason why the interference of the legislature became necessary in regard to Ireland, or what good effects that interference could produce. The course of exchange in every country must necessarily depend on its trade. It must depend on the comparative state of its exports and imports, which, so far as was consistent with the fair exercise of trade, was by no means an immediate object of legislation. The course of exchange was not only now unfavourable to Ireland, but had been so for several years past. It was difficult to say if it was in the power of legislation to apply any remedy without removing the original causes; the most important of which it was certainly not in the power of legislation to remove. Of these the absentee rents he regarded as none of the least important, and this cause of depression in the rate of Irish exchange, he conceived to be not greater at present than in the year 1801.—Another cause of this depression also he conceived to be the present state of Ireland, as it stood in regard to the threatened invasion, and the necessary defence against the projects of a foreign enemy, as well as its own internal commotions. In this state of the country, while the men were employed in its defence, they often thought it prudent to place their wives and children in a place of security, and to convey what moveable wealth they could command in the same manner, or apply it in some other country to the support of their family. But when the people of Ireland came to have the same confidence in their money transactions, and in the stability of their circulating medium, as Scotland and the North of England possessed, the circumstances that were so unfavourable to the exchange of that country would, in a great measure, be diminished.—To all the other causes he had mentioned, that want of confidence in their paper money was no inconsiderable addition, and this want of confidence, the hon. baronet contended, was

not a new or recent circumstance. The people of the north of Ireland, even in times of peace, have been long in the habit of carrying on no trade but through the medium of specie. They have been long in the habit of rejecting paper, and then articles being generally necessary, it has become customary not to tender it. This prejudice in the north of Ireland might be owing to their foreign connexions, or to their more immediate relations with Scotland and England, but must have a tendency to drain the specie from the other parts of Ireland, and to diminish the respectability, and, therefore, the value of the paper currency. The people in the north receive nothing but gold; as their articles are necessary they must have it, and by thus drawing the current specie to one part of the kingdom must injure the rest. The hon. baronet was anxious that nothing violent should be adopted, that the measures adopted on the subject ought rather to have a tendency to assist the natural course of things and to remove obstructions, than to give any new or unnatural direction to existing circumstances.—The hon. baronet concluded by expressing his hopes that the committee moved for would take up the question in its proper light, and would not dissolve themselves till they had placed the Bank of Ireland in such a situation, as to enable them to have some controul over the private banks, and to check, in some measure, the issue of paper by every private person who chose to start up and call himself a banker, without any other qualification or security but the power of adding to the paper currency of the country. Every person making such pretensions should be compelled to justify by something more substantial than appearances, the confidence they claim.

Lord Archibald Hamilton found himself compelled to state, in justice to the noble author of the pamphlet alluded to, that, previous to the restriction on the Bank of Ireland, their paper issues had not amounted to more than 600,000*l.*, whereas since that period he understood their issues of that description were 2,700,000*l.*, which had given an increased dividend of 6½. He farther understood, his lordship stated, that they had given a bonus of 5 per cent, at the very time too when the rate of exchange was 20 per cent. to their disadvantage. It was not merely the present moment that was to be regarded with alarm. But what, on the present system, attended with so many growing evils, must the prospect in future be? He had recurred only to the periods subsequent to the restriction. He did not mean to say

that the evil was greater than it had been at some previous periods; but he meant to say, that it was a growing evil, and ought to be the subject of serious inquiry. He acquiesced therefore, with the hon. baronet opposite (Sir J. Newport), in deploring the evil, as every person must do, and in expressing an anxiety to be able to congratulate the House and the country on the restoration of that confidence in the money transactions of Ireland which was so necessary to its interests.

Mr. *Alexander* said, he hoped the House would go into the proposed inquiry. He wished that there was a uniform medium of circulation in both countries, whether it was of gold or of paper. He contended, that there was no ground for any charge upon the Bank of Ireland, the directors of which acted from the best motives; and if there was any inconvenience it arose from the issue of their paper being too small instead of being too large. The fact was, that the issue of their paper had been intercepted by an extraordinary degree of agency on the part of the private banks.

Mr. *Fox* could not pass unnoticed, an idea that had been suggested in regard to the pamphlet of his noble friend (Lord King). It had been said, that discussion on this subject had an unfavourable tendency, and that on this principle the pamphlet in question had a tendency rather to increase than to remedy the evil. But, he maintained, that nothing could be more favourable on any subject than an examination of facts so far as it is possible to examine them. This the pamphlet of the noble lord certainly did, and the very circumstance which had been advanced as an aggravation of the mischief it was calculated to produce, was the very best proof of its merit, he meant the influence and circulation it had obtained. At his time of life, what influence could that noble lord possess, but such only as was derived from argument, and that conviction which was the necessary accompaniment of truth. And would any man say, that to adduce facts to the public on a subject that called for investigation, and of which the evils were felt, and to accompany those facts with a conviction that those evils were capable of redress, was a measure that could on any occasion, or on any subject, be improper? Nothing, he was sure, would give his noble friend more pleasure than to have his opinions closely investigated. The House ought, he thought, by all means to go into a committee on the subject in question. The more such subjects were discussed so much the better. He had no idea of that

security or confidence in any set of principles, or in any measures, that were the result only of silence, and that must fall to the ground the moment such principles are discussed or examined. He denied that the legislature could not interfere with advantage in regard to the rate of exchange between other countries and this. An hon. baronet had proposed, as an argument against legislative interference in the instance now before the House, that it would be equally improper, and attended with no greater advantage to interfere in the case of Ireland than in the case of *Hamburg*, or any other country less connected with the empire than Ireland. But he would remind the hon. baronet, that about 32 years ago the legislature had interfered in regard to the state of exchange between this country and *Hamburg*, which was precisely the instance which the hon. baronet had said would, in his opinion, be equally fruitless or improper as our interference with Ireland. Yet in 1772, when the exchange between this country and *Hamburg* was unfavourable to this country, and the coin of this country was so debased that it was received at inferior value at *Hamburg*, the legislature thought proper to interfere, and give the coin of this country a nominal value equal to that of *Hamburg*, which, so far from being attended with any disadvantage, had the desired effect.—In respect to the currency of Ireland, it was not the guinea that was raised, but the paper that was depreciated. It was not the guinea that was worth 2s. more, but the paper that was regarded as so much less. The great object, therefore, ought to be, to adopt some effectual measure to support the paper currency of Ireland, and for this purpose to find out the cause of its depreciation. The country, he believed, was exceedingly obliged to the right hon. gent. who proposed the question. He thought the House and the country were indebted to the right hon. gent who had brought forward the motion, and concluded by hoping, that the pamphlet alluded to might be taken into the committee, and the arguments of his noble friend refuted or established.

Mr. *Dick* rose to declare, that he did not mean to cast any reflection on the noble lord to whom he had formerly alluded.—After a few words from Mr. *Dent* in favour of the motion, the motion was agreed to, and a committee appointed, amongst whom were the following members: Mr. *Foster*, Lord *A. Hamilton*, Lord *Henry Petty*, Lord *Folkestone*, Mr. *Pitt*, Mr. *Fox*, Mr. *Grey*, Mr. *Rose*, Mr. *Canning*, Sir *W. Pulteney*, Sir *J. Newport*, Mr. *J. C. Beresford*, Mr. *She-*

ridan, and Mr. Brogden; five to be a quorum.

[IRISH REVENUE ACTS.]—Mr. Corry said, that an order of yesterday for a committee of the whole House on the Irish revenue acts had dropped in consequence of there not being a sufficient number of members to proceed to a ballot, but he trusted there could be no objection to the House now voting itself into a committee on the said acts. It was his intention, to propose in the committee the renewal of the Irish duties, and as they would expire on the 25th of March, he trusted he should not be considered as too rapid in pressing the subject.—

[HIS MAJESTY'S INDISPOSITION.]—Mr. Grey said, he did not mean to oppose the motion of the right hon. gent., but previous to going into the committee, he wished to put a question to his Majesty's ministers, which he would have done antecedent to the motion that had, just been disposed of, if he had had any suspicion that the discussion would have extended to such length. The question he meant to put was deeply interesting to the public, and in putting it he acted under a strong sense of duty, which obliged him to ask some explanation of the terms which had been used both here and in another place, on a subject which affected every British breast. Though, on the first view, the information that had been given seemed calculated to give satisfaction to the public, yet it had created only doubts and anxiety, which were afflicting to every loyal subject. He had risen therefore, to ask some explanation of the words which had been on a former occasion employed in order to do away those doubts and that ambiguity which they had given birth to. If he did not mistake, the words of the Chancellor of the Exchequer were, that there was no necessary suspension of the royal functions. He wished to understand whether the right hon. gent. meant to state, that his Majesty was at present personally competent to the performance of the functions of the executive, and whether he was to consider him as pledged in these words. He wished also to be informed, whether the assertion was founded on his observation in a personal communication with his Majesty, or only on the reports of the physicians attending his Majesty. He put this question, not from any want of delicacy, but in order to remove the anxiety which at present affected the public; and he thought it his duty to ask, and he was sure the House had a right to require an explanation, that

it might know whether, in proceeding with the public business, it was not violating a fundamental principle of the constitution. He trusted the answer would be explicit; but whether satisfactory or not, it was not his intention to oppose the progress of the other measure, the order for which had been dropped yesterday, if the right hon. gent. were disposed to proceed with it this night. Should, however, the answer not be satisfactory, he should consider it his duty, to submit a motion to the House on the subject, on an early day next week.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that whether the question which was put by the hon. gent. was one which when publicly known, would excite regret in the minds of an affectionate and loyal people, or otherwise, was not for him to declare. It was his desire to be as explicit as his sense of his duty would permit, and after the manner in which this subject had been adverted to on a former night, and what he had said on that occasion, he should have thought that all further questions of this kind would have been precluded, and abstained from. He had then stated what was in the recollection of every hon. member, and what the hon. gent. had now repeated. To that he should refer the hon. gent. with this single addition, that it was not founded on any personal intercourse with his Majesty, but on that which enabled him to state it to the House on better and more authoritative information, the concurring testimony of all the five physicians who were in attendance on his Majesty.

Mr. Grey said, that if things continued in the state they were at present, he should think it his duty to make a specific motion on the subject on an early day in next week.

Mr. Pitt suggested whether it would not be right that the proposition made by the right hon. gent. (Mr. Corry) for going into a committee on the Irish revenue acts, having for its object to replace acts which were not to expire till the 25th of March, should take place of another measure, the volunteer consolidation bill, the importance of which daily and hourly pressed stronger upon the country.

Mr. Corry said, that all the duties of Ireland would expire with the existing acts on the 25th of March next. It was therefore essential to forward the present measure, but if it was the pleasure of the House to allow him to propose the schedule *pro forma*, and then to allow the report to be brought up to-morrow, that he might make such comments as he would have thought it neces-

sary to make this night in accompanying and explaining the schedule, he should be happy to accommodate himself to the superior urgency of the subject alluded to by the right hon. gent. After a short conversation between Mr. Foster and Mr. Corry, the House went into the committee, the resolutions were agreed to, and the report ordered to be received to-morrow.

[*MUTINY BILL.*—The *Secretary at War* observed, that among the dropped orders, was one for the committal of the mutiny bill. He trusted, that the House would have no objection to forwarding this important measure now.—The House accordingly went into the committee. The report was ordered to be received to-morrow.

[*VOLUNTEER CONSOLIDATION BILL.*] Mr. Secretary *Yorke* moved the order of the day for the House to resolve itself into a committee on the Volunteer Consolidation Bill. As there were several clauses to propose, he suggested that it would be better to debate the principle of the bill on the report.—The House having resolved itself into a committee, the right hon. Secretary proposed several amendments in the body of the bill, the first of which went to confine the repeal of former laws to those relating to the yeomanry and volunteer corps of Great Britain, it being thought better, he said, to leave the laws relating to the yeomanry and volunteer corps of Ireland as they stood. He also proposed to insert some words to render the fines and penalties under former acts recoverable. His next amendment went to authorise the continuance of the corps now in existence, unless his Majesty should please to discontinue the services of any corps, or part of a corps, by an order through the Secretary of State. These amendments were severally agreed to.

Sir *William Young* then rose to propose an amendment in the second clause. The House, he said, must be aware that the war was like to be of long duration, and it therefore became necessary to look towards a permanent system of defence. He thought that the exemptions tended to withdraw from the force of the country a great proportion of its population. With respect to these he wished to draw the line between those volunteers who had originally come forward on the purest principles of patriotism, and those who had afterwards come forward in order to avoid the compulsory provisions of the defence act. He wished only to extend the exemptions to those corps who had been accepted by his Majesty previous to the 27th of July, 1803, by which means they would only attack upon 80 or

90,000 men, whilst 250,000 of the flower of our youth would be brought back again into the general force of the country. He thought they ought to do all they could to render this great machine of the population of the country as effective as possible, and therefore to strike out from the exemptions all those who had no idea at the time of their coming forward of any exemption at all. He concluded by moving an amendment, for the purpose of confining the exemptions to those corps who had been accepted previous to the 27th of July 1803.

Mr. *Pitt* really hoped it was impossible the House could think this proposition required much argument to prove, that it could not possibly be adopted with any thing like consistency or common sense. In the present session, immediately previous to the Christmas recess, in order to prevent doubts as to a supposed breach on this point, the exemptions had been given to all corps, on condition of exercising a certain number of days. These corps having conformed to that condition, was the House now to withhold or take away the boon it had held forth? Having performed and ratified the contract, so far as they were concerned, was Parliament to forfeit the pledge it had given, and to recal the distinctions it had cancelled and repealed? By this proposition, the exemptions would be taken away from persons to whom they were given by Parliament, and enjoyed by persons coming into these corps with their eyes open. And all this because they had offered their services to avoid the compulsory clauses of the defence act. Now, let him here observe, that if Parliament held out inducements to voluntary service as preferable, and in order to save the trouble of resorting to compulsion, and then endeavoured to retract and take back the inducements to which it had pledged itself; if it had said, "it is true you have complied with what we desired, but we will take away what we promised to you," he thought this amounted pretty clearly to a breach of faith. Then this was to be done because the persons composing the corps enrolled subsequent to the 27th July, were supposed to have avoided compulsion. Now, if there was any point universally recognized and agreed upon, it was, that the compulsory power should be kept in reserve to force the exertion if it was tardy, but that voluntary exertion was preferable, if it could be obtained in sufficient extent; and if that exertion should not be obtained in sufficient proportion in any particular district, the compulsory clauses should be put in force in those districts.—If persons came voluntarily forward, they saved

the trouble of force and selection from the classes. On this ground, therefore, he was unable to comprehend the mode of reasoning resorted to by the hon. baronet. The distinction was inapplicable in another sense; it supposed that all volunteers who offered their services since the 27th of July, had offered them for the purpose of avoiding the ballot. It was a notorious fact, that so far from being influenced by such a motive, they had made their offers previous to the passing of the bill; and the answers to the offers had been delayed, till the sense of Parliament was ascertained by the passing of the bill. He believed this might have been the reason why some of the offers from the country, with which the hon. baronet was particularly connected, had not been earlier accepted. It was but a very short time since this very fact had been brought in proof of the injustice of drawing a line by dates. The whole effect of the distinction proposed, would go in the indirect way, to disband the whole of the volunteers, except the 80 or 90,000 enrolled before the 27th of July. Let nobody suppose that he asserted, that the exemptions were the motive of the offers of volunteer service. He knew it was no such thing. But, he knew that the exemptions having been given and enjoyed, without distinction, equally by all, to take them back now from three-fourths of that force, would be setting a mark on them, which would operate as a discouragement. Whether the volunteer system was the wisest that could have been formed at first, was not now the question; but having gone so far in it, it would be madness now to abandon it. No person contended that it should be abandoned, at least he hoped not.

Mr. *Windham* rose to propose a course of proceeding, which would obviate much trouble. It was, that as a great number of clauses were to be proposed by the movers of the bill, as well as by others, which it was impossible, however intelligible they may be to the proposers, that those who never before heard them should understand, so as to decide on the instant the propriety of adopting or rejecting them, whether it would not be better to have them all admitted into the bill *pro forma* this night, and printed for discussion on the report or re-commitment, when they should have been fully considered. He foresaw, that this proposition afforded room for an objection, that many clauses would get into the bill which its proposers did not approve of, and which being inconsistent with each other, gave rise to a charge of inconsistency against those who drew them up; but he thought

this objection was but apparent and ought to be overcome for the sake of convenience, and of coming better prepared to the discussion.

Mr. *Fuller* defended the motives of the volunteer offers of service. He adverted to the deficiency in the Sussex militia, which arose from the necessity of finding substitutes from the county itself, or the adjacent counties. The county itself was not a manufacturing county, consequently it wanted one of the principal sources of recruiting its militia. It was a maritime county, having no adjoining county on 90 miles of its border.

Mr. Secretary *Yorke* observed, that the principle of obtaining substitutes from the county itself, or the adjoining county, was universal, and one of the oldest in the militia laws.—In answer to the proposition of the right hon. gent. (Mr. *Windham*), it must be obviously inadmissible so far as it went to the reception of all clauses of whatever description. But if it was agreeable, he would state the substance of the clauses he had to propose, which might be agreed to *pro forma*, and the bill being reprinted with them, might be discussed again on Tuesday. The right hon. gent. behind him (Mr. *Pitt*) and any other gent. who had clauses, might then propose them, and they would be debated.

Mr. *Curwen* hoped, after what had been said, that the hon. baronet would see the propriety of withdrawing his clause. If the clause was adopted, it would be partial in its operation, as the ballot had taken place in some districts, and consequently the benefit of the exemptions was enjoyed in those districts; in other districts it had not taken place, and, consequently, the exemption would be denied in those districts, if the clause was allowed to pass. He should, before a distant day, move, that returns of all the volunteer corps should be obtained, distinguishing the classes. He was sure it would then be found that the number benefited by the exemptions was very few.

Colonel *Craufurd* was ready to accede to the proposition made by his right hon. friend, and assented to by the Sec. of State if the hon. baronet, in withdrawing his clause, was to be understood to mean to bring it forward again. He would not however deprive himself entirely of the opportunity of discussing the propriety of those exemptions which deprived us of an armed peasantry, and if the hon. baronet's clause was not to be brought forward on another night, he would offer his observations now.

Mr. *Pitt* said, it would be extremely convenient for the House, before proceeding

farther, to understand what was the mode to be adopted: He had no difficulty in saying that the convenience of gentlemen would be suited if the amendments were brought in, and the House put in possession of the clauses, if it did not interpose too long a delay to the progress of the measure. It had been the custom to agree to clauses and amendments *pro forma*, and afterwards to re-commit them for the observations of others. But he hoped, that before the committee closed or before the House separated, he should have an opportunity of stating the substance of his own amendments, not pledging himself to move them, nor even to state them, if the amendments of the right hon. gent. met his objects.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* explained the object of his right hon. friend (Mr. Yorke) which was to consult the convenience of the House. His right hon. friend would still hear what he had to offer in the nature of amendment, and others would be at liberty to say how far these amendments met their views.

Sir *William Young* said, he should not press his amendment after what had been said; but he thought it would be no breach of faith to take away from the volunteers what was never given to them.—The proposed amendment was then withdrawn.—A further explanation took place betwixt Mr. Pitt and Mr. Yorke, the result of which was, that the right hon. Sec. of State should generally explain the nature of his amendments, and that Mr. Pitt should be permitted to put the House in possession of the scope of his intended improvements.

Mr. Secretary *Yorke* said, if he understood the wish of the committee, it was, that the clauses he had to propose should be received *pro forma*, and that he should state his view of the provisions suggested by the right hon. gent. (Mr. Pitt) with his reasons why he thought some of those ought not to be inserted in the present bill. He set out upon the basis, that the volunteer system must at present be preserved, that it would be unwise at the present moment to lay it aside, but that it must be rendered as effectual as possible. He thought that a great deal of misconception had taken place with respect to the volunteers. The volunteer system had arisen out of the Defence Act, by that act his Majesty was empowered to call out the classes, in case a sufficient number of volunteers did not come forward, to fill up any part of the system that might be done away, but he was of opinion, that that act ought to remain in reserve, to be only executed in case there was a necessity

for it, as it was certainly much better that what was wanted should be effected by the volunteer system of the country than by compulsion.—Many opinions had been thrown out, that the voluntary system was not carried to that extent which it might have been, and some gent. were of opinion that clauses ought to be introduced for that purpose. He wished to state the necessity there was, that they should not attempt to do too much in the way of regulations. He asked gent. to consider under what regulations the volunteers at present subsisted, and what has been done upon that subject. The act of 1794 did no more than enable his Majesty to accept corps, to grant exemptions from the militia ballots; and to make provisions for putting them under martial law in the event of their being called into actual service, but left his Majesty to make such rules and regulations for their discipline as he should think fit. He must, then, observe, that, whatever ought to be done in this respect, it was not necessary to make it part of the present bill; it was only necessary to vote the money wanted for pay and allowances.—With respect to the allowances, there could be no question as to those granted to volunteer corps accepted previous to the first of Aug., but it had been said, that similar liberality had not been shown to the corps accepted since. He begged leave to observe, that in the allowances to the latter, ministers had in view the provisions of the Defence Act, and wished to assimilate the allowances as much as possible to those to which those persons who would have been called out under that act would have been entitled to, 20 days pay, in point of fact, he believed, that most of the corps had exercised 40 or 50 days in the course of the year, which was a strong proof of their zeal. He agreed it was of importance, that in the course of the next 3 months, the volunteer corps ought to exercise more frequently, in order to perfect themselves in discipline.—The right hon. gent. (Mr. Pitt) had proposed, that corps should be invited to assemble on permanent pay and duty, and had also proposed two modes for inspecting these corps. The first, that they should have regular officers as assistant field officers to receive pay; and the other that they should borrow for the time officers from regiments of the line. He was friendly to the principle of corps assembling for a certain time on permanent pay and duty, and if it should appear to be the wish of a sufficient number of volunteers in any particular district so to assemble, they might be permitted to do so

by his Majesty, without any provision on that subject being necessary in the present bill. All that would be necessary, would be to vote the requisite sums of money. Permanent duty was certainly the best state in which discipline could be learnt, but as to giving more than 20 days pay, it became a question for consideration, how far an equivalent would be received for that increased pay. He thought there was considerable danger in applying general rules to this subject; it might be proper in some cases to give the increased pay, while in others it would not; in each case it must depend upon circumstances; but, certainly, there need not be any proviso introduced upon the subject in the present bill.—Another point adverted to had been that of field officers, which he now understood the right hon. gent. (Mr. Pitt) to say, was only intended to apply to those corps who applied for such assistance. He at first understood it differently, but at any rate there was no difficulty in the business, as His Majesty on the recommendation of the lord lieutenant might appoint such field officers or others to volunteer corps as he should think fit. As to the pay to be given to these officers, it had been thought advisable not to give permanent pay to those officers appointed to corps accepted prior to June last but if they held a commission in the army to allow them their half-pay, and this upon the principle that they were held to be persons who did not want such assistance.—With respect to these modern corps, no allowance was made, except for an Adjutant. It might be said, that allowances ought to have been made; but it was not necessary for him to apologize for ministers being as economical as possible; it was better to begin under the mark, than make too large an establishment which it might be difficult afterwards to reduce. Adverting again to the subject of permanent pay, he would just observe, that as the law had stood since 1794, upon the offer being accepted of any corps to assemble upon permanent duty, they were considered to be in the same situation as if called out in case of actual invasion, and were entitled to the marching guinea to provide themselves with necessaries. He would propose a clause to do away doubts upon this subject, in which he should propose, that this guinea should be deducted from the two guineas to which they were entitled after the defeat or expulsion of the enemy.—The right hon. gent. (Mr. Pitt) had proposed that a clause should be inserted to remove doubts with respect to the election of officers.—It was not his intention to propose any such clause. His Majesty undoubtedly had the power of commission-

ing officers recommended by the lord lieutenant or of rejecting such persons. There, therefore, appeared no question about an election except only where that was included in the terms of acceptance. He had mentioned one exception on a former occasion, in the case of the light horse volunteers, who recommended to his Majesty persons to hold commissions in that corps, but when called into actual service, that right had ceased, and in case of the death of an officer, the next in seniority succeeded. There were some who only looked to the corps of the metropolis, considering them as every thing, and who because two or three corps had claimed the right of electing officers, supposed it was general; but, in the country where corps were formed under the influence of gent. of rank and property, no such idea was entertained. It was to be supposed, at the same time, that no person would be appointed an officer in a volunteer corps who was not agreeable to that corps.—Much had been said on a former occasion about the power of committees, but wherever they had interfered in military discipline they had been checked, and no person could say that, in the regulation of financial concerns, they were acting improperly; it was well known that, in case of the death of a Paymaster, there was a committee of paymasters in every regiment of the line. The last point which he had to notice, was the suggestions respecting rules and regulations for enforcing attendance and discipline whilst under arms, by fine, imprisonment, &c. He must say that he was wholly averse to such a plan which he considered to be entirely inconsistent with the nature of the volunteer service operating in its disembodied state. Such a system would, he conceived, not merely produce inconvenience, but would lead to the destruction of the volunteer system or at least to a very considerable diminution of numbers. There was another objection to it likewise arising out of the Defence Act. Provisions were made therefore fines and penalties upon the different classes, in case of disobedience; but it was expressly stated that if a sufficient number of volunteers came forward, they should be relieved from the compulsory clauses of the bill. They having come forward in that confidence and it would be in some instances a breach of faith to resort to these compulsory clauses to be applied against them. He concluded by proposing several new clauses some of which related to the exemption under former acts, and the allowance to volunteers from serving in the militia and army of reserve. It was not intended, h

said to exempt them from the ballot, but that on their names being ballotted they should be placed on a separate list, and that on any one of them quitting his corps he should be called upon to serve by himself or substitute to fill up the first vacancy that occurred in the sub-division.—He also proposed that no person should be exempted from serving or finding a substitute, who did not attend the exercise of his corps 24 days in the course of the year.—Another clause went to enable the deputy lieutenants or magistrates to apportion the quotas for the militia and army of reserve, having regard to the number of volunteers in any particular place. Another clause inflicted penalties for the sale of arms belonging to government, or inducing a volunteer to sell his arms, and to enable commanding officers to have a place for keeping arms, the expense to be paid by the receiver-general of the land tax.—Another clause enabled commanding officers to dismiss any one from a corps, and another to prevent any dispute about withdrawing from a corps, by enacting, that where a commanding officer shall refuse to accept the resignation tendered by any member of the corps, the latter may appeal to the lord lieut. or deputy lieut. who shall decide in a summary way.

Mr. Pitt said, he should have been extremely happy if the right hon. gent. who had just spoken had relieved him from the necessity of addressing the Committee upon the present occasion; but as the matter stood, he was under that necessity. He was not desirous of particularly or tenaciously adhering to one mode rather than another, provided he saw that the substance of the thing he wanted was likely to be secured, and which appeared to him absolutely necessary to be accomplished. It was indifferent to him whether that was done by means of clauses in the bill or by the executive government, in virtue of any discretionary power given for that purpose, provided he found an assurance that it would be done; in that case, he should have been ready to acquiesce with government in any mode they might think expedient to adopt, but from the speech of the right hon. gent. that matter was left wholly uncertain, whether any thing that might amount to the substance of his proposal would be acceded to, on one or two of the most important points, as it appeared to him, in the whole of the volunteer system; he must therefore state to the Committee the ground of his proposal, that they might consider whether clauses would not be better than to leave the matter open to any discretion whatever.—He would take first that point which with

him was the most important object in his mind in the present crisis; namely, that which was to render the volunteers as well accomplished as possible in point of discipline; and he had the good fortune to have the concurrence of the right hon. gent. upon the importance of that subject, as he had admitted the necessity of calling out all the corps, and having them trained and exercised frequently for the purpose of improving them in discipline, and that this should be done as early as possible, and he had assured the Committee that the executive government would enforce this measure. But, Mr. Pitt said, he doubted whether it would not be necessary to insert a clause in the bill for that purpose, in order to have the thing done as effectually and distinctly as it should be. He was aware there was a clause in the bill of last year for that purpose, which gave power to his Majesty to assemble the volunteers, at his command, on the appearance of invasion, but there required something more than the actual appearance of invasion, or a general appearance of actual invasion, as it was generally described; for the enemy may be hovering about, apparently for the purpose of invasion, for many months, and perhaps for years, and when this expression of "appearance of invasion" was of doubtful construction, and particularly as that construction governed the question, whether so large and efficient a body of men as those of the volunteers, should or should not be put in a situation in which they could best acquire perfect discipline. It was the practice to call out the militia in time of war, and that power was not specifically provided for, but was under the general authority which the crown derived from the same sentence he had already quoted, that of actual invasion or in imminent danger thereof; that was the authority by which the militia were embodied, and put on permanent duty, as they always were in time of war; and he wished some principle of this kind to be applied to the volunteers, at least that they might be invited, as many of them had been, to take permanent duty for awhile in certain places, as they had been last year. Ministers then had apparent reason to believe that an invasion was at hand, and, therefore, they invited some volunteers out on permanent duty and pay. They thought that a season in which that was likely. He did not say, that now there was a greater prospect of it, or that this should be made a matter of doubt or question, but he should be sorry that any thing should be neglected, on any account whatever, that could be of use to the volunteer system, for now there

was a stronger reason for our being prepared at all points than at any former period, for that now the danger was, in his opinion, more imminent than ever: and, therefore, he thought it should not be left as an equivocal sentence, as that of appearance of invasion, or imminent danger thereof: in his opinion, in point of policy, the volunteers should not only understand that they may be put on permanent duty now, if in the opinion of the executive government it was fit they should be so, but also that they should understand, that in the opinion of Parliament, they ought to be so for awhile. Whether this event of invasion was to take place in six weeks, or in six months, or eight months, we should be prepared; and therefore he was of opinion that they should be assembled, and should march, and be put on pay and permanent duty, where they should agree to do so, for the purpose of their improvement in their military exercise; and he would insert in the bill words for the purpose of giving the crown the power of so calling this force out in any part it might be thought advisable, for he could not help thinking there was reason for going to that extent, and then the volunteers would be under precisely the same regulations as the militia in that respect, although it might not be necessary to continue them in that state so long: this he thought necessary to be made matter of provision in the bill, not that the crown had not the power already of inviting the volunteers out on pay and permanent duty, but he thought it would be better that the volunteers should understand it to be the opinion of Parliament, as well as that of the executive government, that they should be so invited.—He did not know what the right hon. gent. meant upon the subject of the bounty to be given to volunteers on their being called out, whether this bounty was to be extended to all volunteer corps who should be willing to serve for a time, or only to the 24,000 who are assembled and on permanent duty; that 24,000 was a considerable number for an emergency he was willing to admit, but in making a great effort, such as ought now to be made by means of a body more than 300,000 men, he should hope that many more might be immediately put in this situation, and he should wish this matter to be explained. But on this he was not so anxious to say much, provided he was assured that the encouragement of pay was meant to be offered to all volunteers who may wish to profit in their military acquirements: but on the subject of the bounty, as mentioned by the right hon. gent. he doubted whether

what was proposed, or rather what was stated, would be satisfactory, or even admissible when it came to be considered. The right hon. gent. said, they were to have pay for 21 days on which they should be on permanent duty, but that the guinea which was to be advanced to them was to be deducted out of the original two guineas intended to be allowed in the event of their going into the field, the one on their proceeding to march, the other on their return home after having expelled the enemy.—Now, that did appear to him to be a very bad system to make them efficient for actual invasion, and inverting the order of things; it was adding nothing to what was originally intended to be given, and it was misplacing that which was to be allowed; for it was giving to the men nothing when they were to be most wanted, but taking away all the effect of what was intended to be given, for it was transposing the time and changing a gift into that which was the reverse of it, for by this mode of deducting the guinea out of the two guineas originally intended for each volunteer who shall march to repel an invasion, he would have nothing on the march, if he had received his guinea on being first embodied; so that when the volunteers ought to be most encouraged, government proposed fresh duty to them instead of bounty, and, therefore, he could not help thinking that this part of the plan, as opened by the right hon. gent. would appear, upon further consideration such as could not be persisted in. This was only saying, that if an invasion came, 200,000l. might be saved to the country. Now, if we were sure they would return home to enjoy the sight of their families and children secured by their valour and enjoying the thought of that idea, and the still more glorious one, that of their country being secured in triumph, he should hardly think that in the most sober disposition that any man could view economy, he would conceive that the happiness of that day would be much increased by the reflection, that 200,000l. had been saved to the country by the scrupulous policy of the executive government, and therefore he hoped that the right hon. gent. would, upon reflection, think this part of his policy hardly worth adhering to; and that when this matter came to be stated in detail in the Committee, there would be a disposition to reconsider it. If the volunteer has had his guinea on being first put on his permanent duty, and that is to be deducted out of his original two guineas, as had been originally stated, he will have nothing on his march against the ene-

my; or if having it on his march, he will then have had his two guineas, and he will have nothing on his return home, and therefore he thought this a very indifferent policy. There was, indeed, much wisdom in the policy of the legislature in giving men something that marked its good will; and independent of that, it was natural that when men should be called upon on the sudden, to go for a period from their families and homes; they should have the happiness to know, that although they were obliged to go in the service of the country, and leave those of whom they were the natural protectors, yet that which they had already received, and for which their country had already had their service, would not be deducted out of that which was originally either for their actual march, or their return, that what they may have spent before they marched, and for which their country may already have had their service, will not be taken into the account, but that they shall receive their guinea on their march, and also their guinea on their return home, as if they had received nothing before; he thought this matter extremely important, so much so, that he should feel it his duty to press it hereafter, if he did not find in ministers a disposition to acquiesce in it. However, there was one thing of which he was extremely glad, which was, to see the disposition shewn by the right hon. gent. on the part of the executive government, to encourage the improvement of discipline; and which, if rightly attended to by the volunteers now, they may acquire more in a few weeks, than formerly they might have been able to acquire in some months; because, with the knowledge they now possess, improvement, if duly attended to, might be very rapid. He supposed, that when the right hon. gent. mentioned 26 days for the present year, he meant over and above the 21, for which the pay was to be allowed; if so, there would be no difference of opinion between him and the right hon. gent. in that respect, as far as regarded the present year; for although he wished 40 days, including the days of inspection, yet in this case he should be willing to allow that the 21 should be deemed part of the 46, and he thought it would be extremely desirable, and becoming the wisdom of Parliament, when this system was to become part of our permanent defence, to put the volunteers for awhile on permanent service, to give them a degree of efficiency which they can never otherwise acquire, and this was a subject upon which a very large portion of that House could speak from experience. He did not believe that any experienced offi-

cer in the House, after having looked at this subject with the attention it deserved, would say that the necessary discipline could be acquired in less than 40 days in the year, and that such attention would be highly beneficial to all the volunteer corps, and of course beneficial to their country, which confided so much in them for its security. When Parliament proposed only 20 days, there might have been reason to guide government to have insisted upon a different course being taken from what they did take. He would remark in passing, that the manner in which that was stated by the right hon. gent. to-night, was not quite consistent with the plan he recommended; for the question now was, what number of days shall, or shall not be allowed for the training and exercising the volunteers? The right hon. gent. had said, it would be better not to provide many of these points by provisions in the bill, but leave much to the discretion of the executive government to judge of the circumstances. Now this, in the first instance, would have been very well; but he had a reason, which he would soon state, for not thinking that the executive government ought to have this discretion now. It did not appear to him that the executive government had judged wisely upon this occasion; they seemed to have thought themselves confined to the 20 days, and to give no more time than Parliament gave for this purpose, and that appeared to him to be a very good reason why Parliament should now think that 20 days are sufficient; nor was there any objection to make provision upon this head specifically under the present circumstances. When the House was voting a sum of money as a vote of credit, it was usually left to the executive government to judge how much of it should be issued for any particular purpose: yet, when the House came to judge how much money should be allowed for a specific object, it was more regular and constitutional for the House to regulate the mode of effectuating that object; so that when Parliament came to vote the money to defray the expense of this matter, it should state the number of days which shall be occupied for this purpose.—Nor was this at all entrenching upon the principle by which the other branches of the military service of the country was conducted; he meant that which was in any degree analogous to the present, the militia. In that service, Parliament specified what money the officers and men should be paid, and also the number of days the privates should be trained and exercised, and he did not see why Parliament should not be as distinct

and specific on the subject of the volunteer service as that of the militia; but this, again, he did not mean to discuss now, he merely threw it out in passing, as a matter fit hereafter to be discussed.—As to the means of instructing the volunteers by field officers and adjutants from the regular service, he threw that out for the consideration of ministers; he did not intend to produce any clause to that effect; but, unquestionably, if he did not see more disposition than had been hitherto shewn by ministers to make some provision for that purpose, he should feel it his duty to bring forward a measure for that purpose for the consideration of Parliament, not by way of clause in any bill, for it would come more regularly by way of address to his Majesty; but he would be satisfied to hear from ministers, that the volunteers should have the benefit of the instruction of officers detached from the line, during the period of permanent duty of the volunteers; but he saw an unwillingness in ministers to allow pay to any field officer for thus instructing the volunteers. He should not, at present, go into the ground of that objection. The committee would recollect that the very first day he stated this matter, he accompanied his statement with a declaration, that he did not wish that such officers should be provided for any corps who did not expressly desire to have that species of instruction, and who should actually apply for it, nor did he propose this at all with any view but that of such officers being mere temporary assistants to the commanders of the volunteer corps. Ministers said, that in many instances it was done, and the whole question was a question of expense; it must be desirable that the volunteers should have the best instruction they possibly could have, and, therefore, whether they should be instructed by those who knew but little, or by some who knew nothing of that which it was essential for the volunteers to learn, was a question which he did not know how to argue. Whether it was better to be taught by those who have a perfect knowledge of the thing to be learnt, or by those who knew it imperfectly, or by those who did not know it at all, was a thing which he could not argue, because his mind knew not how to argue that upon which it was unable to conceive the application of an argument, since nothing could be matter of rational argument upon which it was inconceivable how a doubt could be entertained upon it; and, as to the matter of economy, upon a point so essential as that of knowledge for the volunteers, in order to make them efficient in service and most essential to the safety of their

country, and when he considered that this economy involved only a question of a few shillings per man, to enable such an immense body as the volunteers to be of eminent service to their country, and to withhold that instruction which could alone make them thus useful, for the sake of saving such few shillings, was a species of economy which did not enter into his understanding. Comprehending it under the head of the general scale of the expenditure of a war like the present, and compared with the general scale of our means of defraying that expenditure, great as that expenditure must be, or considered with reference to our resources, and feeling that this expense may amount to a few thousand pounds, was that which, considering the utility of the measure on the one hand, and the expenditure on the other, he knew not how a representative of the people of this country, bound to adopt measures for their general welfare, could possibly regard as a question. Ministers themselves admitted that this instruction to the volunteers was desirable; but they said there were but few instances, in which the officers so wanted, could be procured; certainly they would be few, if ministers were determined to give them so little encouragement. He knew it was impossible to over-rate the exertions of gentlemen of fortune and distinction in the country, for the purpose of rendering the volunteers as nearly perfect as possible; he knew no limits to their zeal and ardour, but that must be confined to those districts in which they resided, whereas persons of great skill and eminence might be found, who, from a combination of untoward circumstances, had been obliged to give up a career of glory in the profession of arms, from want of a prospect of advancement consistent with their age or talents, and to retire into the obscurity of a country village, in a state, if not of penury, certainly far from opulence, who could not transfer a family from a distant part of the country to which he had retired for the prudent purpose of that economy that was essential to his existence, into another where his services might be rendered by way of instruction to others, and by which he might renew and rekindle that flame which was only clouded, but not extinguished in his breast by pecuniary disappointment, and add more laurels to his life, if this encouragement were held out to him. This was not an imaginary character that he was drawing, he had an opportunity of knowing several such, one of whom he had an opportunity of serving and of bringing into a state where his talents had been eminently useful.—Having expa-

tiated upon this subject, he said, he hoped there was no objection against the volunteers availing themselves of assistance of such immense value as this, in such a crisis as the present. He should be sorry, indeed, if any difficulty should stand in the way of this most important point, upon which, however, he should not say any more at present. —The next point was, that of the appointment of officers of the volunteers, on which the right honourable gentleman agreed it was better not to make any legislative provision; he originally thought so too; and the only doubt with him was, whether something had not been rendered necessary by the point having been so much and so unnecessarily agitated, in order that the authority of the legislature might set the matter at rest. —Upon the subject of signing the commissions of officers in the volunteers, he thought the practice which had hitherto been followed, that of giving them all the sign manual, highly objectionable; not only because it was so very laborious, and in its nature productive of unavoidable delay, inasmuch that officers were obliged to wait for months for their commissions; but also because the thing was absolutely unnecessary, for they might be under the same regulations as the commissions of the militia, which were signed by the lieutenants of the counties, except in cases to which the crown did not assent. —There was another point on which he had the misfortune still to differ from the right hon. gent.: he meant with regard to the propriety of making regulations to discipline volunteer corps by means of parliamentary provision, instead of leaving that matter to the discretion of the executive government, and for regulating their attendance, and taking due care of their arms, &c. He had prepared a clause upon that subject, and which he must still offer, for he would venture to say, it was the general complaint of all officers of volunteer corps, that there were some among them who, not for want of any good will, for that he knew the whole mass of them possessed in something almost equal to perfection, but from those ideas which were inseparable from all men who had not a great deal of experience, did not bestow on the office of a volunteer, that attention which was absolutely requisite to complete that character. There would be husbandmen, and there would be artisans, who would chuse to think that they were soldiers, somewhat sooner than their officers might think them entitled completely to that character; the consequence was, that they would appear only on some shewy day, when but little advantage was to be obtained

from the drill. He did not say the volunteers had not done, in general, very well, but of this he was sure, that in one half the time they took up at first they would gain more than double the knowledge, for in this, as in everything else, it was after some knowledge was painfully gained, that knowledge was easily and rapidly acquired, and without more and fuller attendance, perfection was not to be obtained. He knew it was very popular at present to say that the essence of the volunteer system was to leave everything to voluntary exertion; that there was no necessity to enact anything, that the zeal of volunteers would do every thing, that there was nothing to fear from their want of discipline. Much of this sort of doctrine might be at present popular, but it was a species of popularity which a man who loved his country, and who gravely considered its true interest, would not seek. He knew the volunteer corps were a body of men open to good sense, and he was of opinion they might easily be persuaded in the bulk to assent to some measures of compulsion, not that they all needed compulsion to perform their duty, but because some of them did; for it was not unknown to any corps, that there were among them some who were less often at the drill and less attentive when there than others, so that when they did attend they not only manifested their own imperfections, but, from the nature of military exercise, they must of necessity impede the progress of others in their improvement; and then there was some levity to be expected from the age and habits of some of them, so that to his mind moderate compulsion was in a considerable degree essential to their attaining the height of military perfection, of which with attention they were capable. He knew it was more popular to compliment them all, and to say that they wanted nothing, but he thought that pursuing this course without enforcing a system by which they might be essentially improved, would be the highest imprudence; and here there was more necessity for making some regulations than there had been in the first instance; since Parliament had formerly enacted particular matters positively, and then said that such other rules and regulations should be adopted as to his Majesty should seem meet; thereby evidently conveying an idea, that many things would seem meet to be done by way of rules and regulations which were not specified or pointed out by that law; but to his Majesty's executive government nothing did seem meet to be done beyond the strict provisions of the statute, which amounted to a

hint to Parliament, by way of caution, that if they wanted any thing to be done, they must enact it specifically; that if they trust to the executive government to do any thing more than was duly set down for them, Parliament would be disappointed; therefore, if there were any rules and regulations at all necessary, Parliament must point them out, or they would never be adopted, for which reason he had in his pocket a clause for this purpose, which he should hereafter offer to the House.—There was a declaratory clause in the bill at present, which related to the power of resignation in a volunteer, which, in the present condition of things, required one alteration, and that was, to turn every negative in it into an affirmative declaration. A doubt had been once entertained as to what was intended by the legislature as to the power of resignation of a volunteer; upon the opinion of the most eminent in rank, in the profession of the law not upon the bench, and not more eminent in rank than in talents and abilities, nor more eminent in either, than he was for public virtue, and all those private qualities which render a man justly estimable in life; he meant his Majesty's attorney general. That learned gent. gave an opinion upon the question of a volunteer's power to resign. Another very distinguished gent. gave an opinion directly opposite to it, accompanied with great eloquence, and more solidity of judgment than might have been expected to accompany such diffusive eloquence, and the learned judges of the court of King's Bench determined with the opinion of the latter gent. and held that a volunteer had, by law, a right to resign when he pleased, and without any condition; now this bill was drawn by those who said nothing of any doubt being entertained on this point while the thing was doubtful, who declared that the opinion of the court of King's Bench was so consonant to their wishes as to what the law should be, that if they had not so decided they would have brought in a bill to make the law so. But how did these very persons now declare that law? They now left the day in blank in the bill to be filled up by the committee, and as to the law which the court of King's Bench had decided, saying, that a volunteer might resign in any manner, and when he thinks proper, without any condition, they said, that he shall be able to do under certain conditions, what the court of King's Bench had already decided he might do without any condition whatever—that the person who the court said might resign when he pleased,

shall be able to resign within three weeks after he had given notice of his intention—that the point which the court had decided, was doubtful; that was to say, that a thing was doubtful after it was decided there was no doubt; that a man might be able to do conditionally, that which the law already enabled him to do without condition. The clause stated, “that whereas doubts have arisen,” which should be altered to, “whereas there is no doubt.”—The clause stated, “that therefore after three weeks notice he shall be at liberty to resign;” which should be altered to “after three weeks notice he shall not resign.”—The right hon. gent. adverted to the assertion so often made, that the ballot lists were dry in particular districts; but this he attributed much more to the unequal distribution of the quotas to be ballotted for the militia, &c., than to the extension of the volunteer system. This inequality he was very desirous that some means should be devised to remove. Reverting to the discipline of the volunteers, he took notice of an evil which he described to exist to a great extent, and which ought to be corrected; namely, the practice of farmers in preventing the men in their employment from attending drill, and also the conduct of the master manufacturers in the great manufacturing towns, practising a similar restraint upon their apprentices, over whom they seemed to conceive that they had the power of preventing them from earning any money unless from their employment. Those were evils against which he would be glad to see some provision made. He concluded with professing his wish to assist in framing any measure to advance the improvement of the volunteer system, declaring that he had no wish to embarrass the progress of the bill before the House, which, on the contrary, he was sincerely anxious to render as perfect as possible.

Mr. Secretary *Yorke* stated, that there was a circumstance which he omitted to mention, when he first addressed the committee, and that was, that it was intended to appoint an inspecting field officer to every 2,500 or 3,000 men, and which field officers, in case of invasion, were to act as brigade generals with the corps under their inspection.—With respect to that part of the bill which regarded the election of officers, although he was of opinion, that it should be generally left to the King's discretion, yet he thought that on many, or, indeed, most occasions, it would be proper to allow the lieutenants of the counties to sign commissions.—He would trouble the committee with a few words on the declara-

tory clause on which so much had been said. No member in that House could entertain a more sacred reverence than he did for the decision of the court of King's Bench; yet, with all the respect that he entertained for it, he would claim the privilege of asserting, that the judgment of that court did not settle the law in general with respect to the volunteer system, although he must allow it did in the particular point which was submitted to it. Besides, the decision of that court was not final, for every member of that House must know, that a writ of error would lie from a judgment pronounced in the court of King's Bench: and where men of great professional eminence and acknowledged reputation differed in their interpretation of a particular statute, the framers of a new bill on that subject would be well satisfied in commencing the preamble of it, with the expression, "whereas doubts have arisen, &c." With respect to that part of the bill which referred to the distribution of the quotas, his idea was, that the lieutenants should make two returns, one as if the volunteers did not exist, and the other specifying the exemptions.

Mr. Pitt repeated the idea thrown out in his former speech, of the necessity of employing in the volunteer service, as field officers, either persons on half-pay, or persons who had once been in the army, but had retired from it. They would be fully as serviceable as an increased number of subalterns, and would not create any greater expense. Great as the patriotism of those at the head of the volunteer establishment was, it would not be expected that they could go through the permanent drudgery of continual drills. That would only be conducted by officers who, by a moderate and secured pay, were attached to the different corps.

Mr. Curwen objected to many parts of the system, and hoped that apprentices who had been admitted into volunteer corps, would not be taken away from their masters' service, without some allowance in recompense. He disapproved of the practice of levying fines, and recommended an allowance of pay, but for what period he would not take upon himself to suggest. If gent. were still much attached to the practice of fining, he thought all the advantages that were expected from that usage, could be secured by a reasonable deduction from such pay for every non-attendance. The conditions of the services of the different volunteer corps were so various, that he much feared no general code could be formed for the regulations of so diversified and complicated a system.

Mr. Fuller could by no means be reconciled to the idea of allowing pay to field-officers. With respect to the idea of remunerating the volunteer, which has been so much insisted on, he observed, that a generous public would not hesitate to reward him afterwards. Some of the hon. gentleman's observations created much risibility in the House; but he declared, that attempts to beat him down would be found ineffectual, and that no consideration whatever should prevent him from speaking his mind.—Some explanatory conversation took place between Col. Eyre and Mr. Sec. Yorke, relative to the attendance of the adjutants, serjeant-majors, &c.

Sir John Wrottesley expressed his opinion, that some general rule should be laid down which would go to meet the difficulties complained of. With respect to this, however, he thought the variety of the occupations of the people of this country a disadvantageous consideration. It might, notwithstanding, be found that some degree of military duty would suit every respective description of the inhabitants, and which may be arranged by his Majesty's ministers, with the assistance of, or carried into effect under, the superintendence of general officers.

Mr. C. Wynne adverted to several remaining details in the system, for which some efficient regulations ought to be established, particularly to the circumstance of farmers' servants being allowed to be called out. He thought some provision should be made with respect to those who may be called out on permanent duty. On these points, he thought something more effectual should be brought forward than had been as yet proposed.

Mr. Secretary Yorke then proposed some farther amendments, which were without discussion ordered to be incorporated in the bill.—The chairman was then ordered to leave the chair, and to report the bill, with the amendments, to the House.—The House resumed, and ordered the report to be now received.—The amendments were then formally agreed to by the House, and on the motion of Mr. Sec. Yorke, the bill, as amended, was ordered to be printed, and the whole taken into farther consideration on Tuesday next.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Saturday, March 3.

[MINUTES.]—Sir John Cox Hippesley reported from the committee appointed to try the merits of the Coventry election, that

the sitting member, Peter Moore, Esq. was duly elected, but that the petition was not frivolous nor vexatious.—The mutiny bill was reported, and ordered to be read a third time on Monday.—Mr. Alexander obtained leave to bring in a bill for permitting the importation of raw hides into Ireland in neutral bottoms, on the payment of the same duties as in British or Irish bottoms.—John Fane, Esq. brought up the report from the committee on the London election, stating, that the sitting members for that city, alderman Curtis, Price, Combe and Anderson were duly elected, and that the petition of Sir Watkin Lewes was frivolous and vexatious.—The royal marine mutiny bill went through a committee of the whole House, and the report was ordered to be received on Monday.—Mr. Alexander presented a petition on behalf of certain burgesses of the borough of Liskeard, praying to be heard on the subject of the election now depending before the House, —Ordered to be taken into consideration at the same time as the other petition on this subject.

[*IRISH REVENUE ACTS.*] — Mr. *Alexander* brought up the report of the committee upon the Irish revenue acts. On the first resolution having been read,

Mr. *Corry* rose to submit to the House some observations upon the resolutions which had been reported to the House. It appeared to him necessary to do so, in order to convey to the House a knowledge of the principle upon which the schedule was formed. He would be as succinct in his statement as was consistent with clearness of explanation, because it would be impossible to enter into a detailed discussion upon the subject, until the schedule was printed, and in the hands of the members of that House.—There were two preliminary observations which he wished to make, viz. that the provisions to carry this schedule into effect belonged to the bill into which this schedule, if approved of by the house, would be afterwards introduced; and here he wished to observe, that according to the principle always pursued with regard to the duties upon certain articles relating to the manufactures of Ireland, particularly the linen trade and the dyers', though it was intended that all those articles should remain in the same state in which they were, yet the freedom from those duties was not contained in the schedule, but would be introduced in the bill.—The other observation he wished to make was this, that the limitation in point of time, if any such limitation should be thought fit, would be the subject of a

clause in the bill. It would be, therefore, unnecessary for him to dwell upon these points at present, because the proper time for discussing them would be in the committee on the bill. This schedule, which was calculated to promote the convenience of the merchants, and to facilitate the better collection of the revenue, divided itself into eight heads. The 1st related to the imports; the 2nd to the import of American articles, pursuant to the American treaty; the 3rd the export duties upon all native articles of Ireland; the 4th related to the tonnage duty; the 5th to the bounties on imports and exports; the 6th contained the inland excise; the 7th to the drawbacks of excise; and the 8th, to the counter-vailing duties, pursuant to the Act of Union and the Acts passed since. The schedule related only to the foreign trade of Ireland, and did not touch upon the trade between G. Britain and Ireland, which was regulated by the Act of Union. Pursuant to the principles of the Act of Union, all foreign articles imported into Ireland through G. Britain, paid the same duties as if imported directly into Ireland. This was a departure from the old system in Ireland. There used to be a certain rate of duty retained in G. Britain upon foreign articles imported through this country into Ireland, therefore the duty was less than upon the articles coming directly into Ireland; but this since the Union had been abandoned. He mentioned this, because the foreign column in the old schedule would not appear in the new one. It would be found in this schedule of rates, that many obsolete articles had been omitted, some articles were taken from the English book of rates, which were not in the Irish book.—So much as to the form of the schedule. The object of the schedule was a consolidation of the subsisting duties, and not an increase of revenue. He did not mean to say, that there was no increase upon some articles, and diminution upon others; but the object of the schedule was not an increase of revenue, but a consolidation of the subsisting duties, with a view to the ease of the merchant, and the better collection of the revenue. In cases where there were two duties upon articles for instance of 6d. each, they were consolidated into the duty of 1s. On some articles there were duties ad valorem, and rated duties, in which case the merchant was obliged to make a double entry. To prevent this trouble, the duty was brought to one denomination, viz. either an ad valorem duty or a rated duty.—Another thing to be observed was, that all fractions of a penny were charged to the nearest integer, that is to say, if the duty was 1½d, it was reduced to 1d.

if it was a 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. it was raised to 2d. The duties of customs were those subsisting under the following Acts, viz. the 40 Geo. 3d, the 41 Geo. 3d, c. 33, which related to tea, coals, and sugar; the 42 Geo. 3. c. 117, which was the 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Act, laying duties upon the import of foreign articles into Ireland; and the 43 Geo. 3. c. 92, imposing of 10 per cent. These Acts contained the whole of the import duties.—The second column contained the drawbacks relating to the transit trade of Ireland: he meant foreign articles imported into Ireland and then exported. The amount of this trade was very small, and did not ordinarily exceed 250,000l. or 300,000l. a year. Of this, 150,000l. consisted of the articles exported to G. Britain, and the remainder to foreign countries. The principles adopted with regard to drawbacks were two: the 1st. was a principle that prevailed in Ireland before the Union, which was a principle of a full drawback of all duties; and so far as the duties of 1800 were consolidated, the old principle of drawbacks was adhered to. There was another principle of drawback arising out of the Union; it had been adopted by Parliament as a principle of sound policy, that whatever regulations either country might make internally, with regard to its trade, taxes, or manufactures, yet with regard to their trade with foreign countries, a principle of equality should be maintained as far as it was practicable, in order to give both countries an equal chance for the transport of their produce and manufactures. The new duties laid on since the Union were not drawn back, because there were corresponding duties laid on in this country. In the last session there was a duty laid on in this country of 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. which as it was considered as a war tax was not drawn back; there was also a duty of 10 per cent. laid on in Ireland, which was a permanent tax appropriated to the payment of the interest of the debt, and it was proposed to give a drawback for this 10 per cent.—Without troubling the House farther upon this subject, he would now proceed to make a few observations upon the articles contained in the schedule, and he had the satisfaction to think that, with a very few exceptions, he had met, by anticipation, the wishes of the mercantile people of Ireland. He had received communications from the merchants of the cities of Dublin, Cork, and Waterford, and it was a great satisfaction to know, that, generally speaking, their wishes had all been complied with, even by anticipation. He had already stated where there was an *ad valorem* and a rated duty upon the same ar-

ticle, they were reduced to the same denominations; in these cases the skill of the officer making the calculation had been relied upon, and if any mistake should appear, it certainly was open to conviction. Some foreign manufactures would be found to be raised, such as cotton, muslin, and things of that sort, in order to protect the British and Irish manufactures in the consumption of Ireland. There was one article of importance, upon which he wished to say a few words, he meant the Newfoundland fishery, with regard to which the import duties were greater than those in this country. But now the Newfoundland fish came into Ireland not only duty-free till 1808, but received a bounty till May next. The duties upon the importation of oil and blubber were greater in Ireland than in G. Britain, but they were now made the same, and it was his intention to propose that this trade should be put upon the same footing with respect to both countries. It would be observed that the duty upon coffee was nearly doubled, but that arose from this circumstance: the Custom duty was 6d. and the Excise duty 6d. but as the latter was badly collected, the Custom duty was raised to 11d. leaving the Excise duty only 1d. for the purposes of regulation. Drugs were an article of great importance, and from the smallness of their bulk, and the greatness of their value, afforded great opportunities of smuggling: the duty upon them was from 150 to 200 per cent., that duty was now reduced in order to take away the temptation of smuggling. The drugs imported for the purpose of the manufactures and the dying trade, would, in the provisions of the bill, be perfectly free from duty. With respect to the article of wood, the duties were merely consolidated, and not raised. The rates were not extended in point of duty, but in point of the specifications of the dimensions. In the article of staves there was a reduction, as it was much used in the provision trade of Ireland. This trade, he was sorry to state, now stood in need of assistance, but he hoped that the languor of it was only occasional, and not permanent.—With regard to the article of foreign salt, the House would perceive that the rate of duty upon salt was charged in Ireland by the bushel, which was less than the Winchester bushel. This mode of discharging that article admitted of great variation in different ports, and great advantage could be given to the importer by having it pressed and heaped in the measure. This was not only the case in different ports, but sometimes there was a considerable difference in the admeasurement even in the same

port, perhaps, from the incorrectness of the officer. It was now proposed that it should be discharged by weight, and not by measure. The weight of the Winchester bushel was 84 lb. upon which there was a duty of 2s. it was now proposed that it should be discharged by the bushel of 56 lb. in the same manner as the British salt imported into Ireland. With respect to saltpetre, it stood as it did last session, when the duty was reduced from 7s. 6d. to 3d the cwt. By the 43 Geo. III. there was a duty laid on the article of provisions going to foreign countries of 4 per cent. : to this duty British provisions were subject. But previous to this duty, there was an old subsisting duty upon the export of provisions from Ireland, so that in fact, there was a greater duty upon Irish provisions than upon British. This inequality it was now proposed to reduce, so as to put both countries on equal terms.—The object of the next article of the schedule was, to carry into effect the American treaty, and the regulations were the same for both countries, with this exception, that the countervailing duties laid on American tonnage in this country was not adopted in Ireland. The old export duty on the export of native articles from Ireland was made in general the same to all parts of the world, and the bounties on imports and exports remained the same.—With regard to the drawbacks upon sugar, it was necessary to observe, that the sugar duties in England were made annual, in lieu of the land tax, which was sold; and this was done upon a constitutional principle, to ensure the frequent calling of Parliament. The sugar duties varied sometimes, and of course so did the drawbacks; the duty upon this article in Ireland was founded upon the same principle, and was therefore voted annually, and could not be introduced into the schedule, which related only to permanent duties.—The duty upon malt would not be found in this schedule, because it was proposed to vote it annually in Ireland, upon the same constitutional principle to which he had before adverted, and therefore must form the subject of a separate bill. The duty on licences was in some degree changed. The grocers' licences were formerly 2 l. for cities, 2 l. for market towns, and 1 l. for the rest of the kingdom. It was now proposed to make them 3 l. for cities and towns returning members to Parliament, and 2 l. for the rest of the kingdom. Factors dealing in home-made spirits were subject to a licence duty; it was now proposed to extend that duty to dealers in foreign spirits.—The next article of the schedule related to the drawbacks of

Excise Duties, and upon these there was no change proposed. The next head related to the countervailing duties; it was proposed, to consolidate the duties under the Act of Union, and those of the 43d Geo. III. cap. 22.—He had now stated the principle of the measure, and he hoped it would meet with the approbation of the mercantile people in Ireland, which he was sure would be a strong recommendation to that House. Any proposed alterations or amendments he should be very ready to listen to, and he was sure that that house and ministers would do every thing in their power to guard and protect the trade of Ireland, which they had always watched over with the most paternal and tender solicitude.—He concluded with stating, that he hoped the printed schedules would be in the hands of the members of that house by Monday, and that in a few days he should be able to bring in the bill, or bills, upon these resolutions.

Mr. Foster said, he did not mean to enter into any observations upon the subject then, but he wished the hon. gent. would lay before the house a list of such obsolete articles as had been left out of the schedule. He was glad to hear that the merchants of Ireland were so well satisfied with this schedule, because he inferred from thence, that the duty upon the export of linen, which had been so much complained of in Ireland, was abandoned.

Mr. Corry expressed the satisfaction it would have given him, had any alteration of this kind been practicable, but that no such alteration was contained in the schedule. He was sorry he had not made himself more intelligible to the rt. hon. gent. No person could be more anxious than he was to be favourable to Ireland, particularly when its first and most important article of export was in question; but he thought it would be unfair and inconsistent with the principles of the union, if the articles of the one country did not leave the ports of the other precisely under the same circumstances as they would do the ports where such articles were manufactured. It was fair that articles of cotton manufacture should go from the ports of Ireland with the same duty as from this country. Indeed none of the manufactures of this country were free from the export duty. Would it then be reasonable that Irish linen going out with British linen should be free from the export duty while the British linen was subject to it? In this case the British manufacturer must labour under an almost insuperable disadvantage, a disadvantage of not less than 4 per cent. But the great object was to raise the taxes within the year, and not to be

running in debt to this country, as the practice had hitherto been; and in order to avoid this evil, which was certainly the greater of the two evils, some inconveniency must be submitted to, which ought to be less felt when it is farther considered that this duty only operated as a war tax, and that consequently it would terminate with the war.—But it was still less to be complained of when it was considered that every article used in the different stages of that manufacture comes in free of duty, and that a bounty likewise is given on its exportation.—The right hon. gent. here begged leave to put a case: suppose linen of Irish manufacture and linen of English or Scotch manufacture were to leave the same port, and were destined for the same market, would not the British manufacturer have a right to complain were he to pay a duty from which the Irish manufacturer was not only exempted, but enjoyed the additional advantage also of a premium, and of the free import of his raw materials? He would appeal to any Irishman, however indifferent he might be to the interests of his country, if he would not think himself entitled loudly to complain did the converse of such a proposition really exist? How, therefore, could we require from others what we should be unwilling to concede ourselves? He would be sorry in any degree to disappoint the right hon. gent. or to meet his disapprobation in this measure, whose care he knew had been uniformly directed to the support and prosperity of that manufacture. Rather than incur disapprobation, indeed, he flattered himself that he also would be considered as its warm supporter, and as a coadjutor to those who were its best friends. He would be happy, indeed, to exonerate that manufacture from the duty in question, but found that it could not be done consistently with the other interests of the country, and without the greatest injustice to the British manufacturer. As an honest man, therefore, he was decidedly of opinion, that no such exemption could be made.

Mr. Foster was not disposed to enter into any argument on the subject; nor did he give his opinion whether such a duty should or should not be laid on that manufacture. He had only concluded, from the face of the right hon. gent's. statement, that that duty was to be removed. If he had been led into an error, it was with the right hon. gent. himself that that error originated; for he had certainly stated that the schedules he had submitted to the House, had met with the approbation of the manufacturers and merchants, whose approbation, from what he knew of their sentiments, was not to be

obtained by a continuance of the duty. He was sorry it was not taken off, but he did not mean to enter into the propriety either of doing or of not doing so.

Mr. Corry begged leave to put the right hon. gent. right. He had not really used the words to which the right hon. gent. had alluded. He had only expressed his hope that it would meet the approbation of all the mercantile interest of the country. He had received letters from the merchants of Cork, stating certain circumstances and certain requisitions that would be acceptable to them. All these he had complied with in the schedule by anticipation, and hoped they would, therefore, be pleased. The merchants of Belfast had desired the measure to be postponed, and for this reason he had delayed it for some time; but they had come forward with no requisitions whatever. In letters from Dublin a drawback on salt had been requested, and this was one instance, and except another of very little moment, the only instance, in which he had not complied with what he knew to be the wish of those who were concerned.

Mr. Dawson complimented the right hon. gent. on the perspicuity and clearness with which he had expressed himself; and thought that his statement ought in this respect to give general satisfaction; but said, that on his return home after the last session, he was very much blamed by his constituents for not opposing the tax when it was imposed. His silence, he confessed, was owing entirely to ignorance, as he was not aware that such a duty had been imposed. He was one of those who had opposed the Union; but as soon as that act of the Legislature had passed, he had done all in his power to make it as palatable as possible. He was sorry, therefore to see one of the first acts of the united Legislature have so great a tendency to depress the staple commodity, and almost the sole manufacture of Ireland. Such a step, he thought, must make the union still more unpopular than any thing that had hitherto been done.

Mr. Alexander did not see why the North of Ireland should be exempted from any of those duties that were necessary to support the government more than any other part of the empire. He thought the situation of the state required some exertion, and did not apprehend that the linen trade was at all suffering under the tax. No class of labourers in Europe were better paid than those connected with the linen manufacture in Ireland, and, therefore, none, he thought, were better able to contribute to the support of the state. It would be enough if they were relieved from the tax when the situation of the country could admit of it.

Mr. *Atkins* said, he did not think there were any grounds for taking off this duty; there were between thirty and forty articles employed in the linen manufacture of Ireland, imported duty free, which was not the case with English manufactures.

Mr. *Hawthorne* thought the tax in question could be no reasonable subject of complaint, when it was considered that it was not a permanent tax, but intended to continue only during the war. Upon this principle it met with his concurrence, though, otherwise, he confessed he should have been disposed to oppose it.

Lord *De Blaquiere* maintained that, notwithstanding the tax complained of, they still go to market with advantage, as had been fully explained by his right hon. friend. The duty his lordship considered not as a burden, but rather as a subject of glory, that they were called upon to pay their quota in support of the country in the present crisis.

Lord *Castlereagh* did not wish that it should go abroad that the linen trade was taxed more than it could really bear. The truth was, that the tax as in every other article of manufacture must fall not on the manufacturer, but on the consumer. The great question was, whether the tax was of such a nature as to prevent the manufacturer's going to a foreign market, or if it was of such an extent as to operate as an embargo on the export of the article? But if the tax was of such a nature, his lordship maintained, as not to shake the export nor to narrow the circulation of the article in a foreign market, there could be no reasonable objection to its imposition, particularly when justified by other circumstances. Otherwise his lordship allowed that that tax would certainly be impolitic. Another question that would naturally occur on this subject was whether the export during the operation of the tax was greater or less than in former years, when unencumbered with the tax? The duty fell at all events so moderately on the linen traders, that they were not entitled to complain, unless it could be shewn that it affected in any material degree their usual rate of exportation.

Lord *De Blaquiere* did not understand that there were any particular complaints in Ireland on the subject. The opinions of the people there were not particularly hostile to the measure.

Mr. *Foster* stated, that in regard to the linen board, no opinion had been asked of them, nor had they entered into any resolution, or given any opinion on the subject. He understood it, however, to be the general desire of people in Dublin to

have the tax removed. The question still lies before the linen board in a state of indecision. He would wish, he said, to have the different statutes on the subject laid before the House.

Mr. *Corry* acknowledged that resolution had been entered into at the meeting to which the right hon. gent. alluded, but that that meeting had been called merely to explain the grounds of the tax. At the same time there was no disapprobation expressed, and considering the attention which the right hon. gent. himself had given to the subject, he was willing to consider his not expressing positive disapprobation as a tacit acknowledgement that the measure was justifiable, for he was certain that if that right hon. gent. regarded the measure as incompatible with the public good, he would not have hesitated to have given it his most decided and peremptory negative. Since this was not the case, he was willing to construe his silence into approbation. With respect to the motion of laying the different statutes before the House, he would accede to it with the greatest satisfaction, but it would necessarily require some time.—the report was agreed to, and a bill ordered to be prepared and brought in accordingly.

After which, *Adjourned till Monday.*

Mr. *Corry* moved, that a list of the articles contained in the book of rates by act of Parliament be laid before the House, with some other papers connected with the Irish revenue, which was agreed to accordingly.

Mr. *Foster* then moved for some accounts relative to the real and official value of the exports and imports of Great Britain to and from Ireland.—Agreed to.—Also that there be laid before the House copies or extracts of the divers proclamations which have been made in Great Britain or Ireland, respecting corn, meal, or malt, Indian corn, rice, or potatoes, &c. since the Union, to the latest period the same can be made up. Ordered.

Mr. *Dawson* moved, that there be laid before the House, an account of all linen imported from Great Britain or Ireland, distinguishing that which was manufactured in Ireland since the Union, to the 5th of January 1804, distinguishing each year. Ordered.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, March 5.

[MINUTES.]—The various bills before the House were forwarded in their respective stages, and some routine business

disposed of.—Mr. Alexander, attended by several members, brought up the mutiny bill, which was read a first time.

[CATHOLIC CORRESPONDENCE.]—The Earl of *Suffolk* took the opportunity to state, that it was his intention, after the recess, should no other peer more competent to do justice to the subject than himself come forward on the occasion, to call the attention of the House to an affair of considerable importance, and which had been the subject of a correspondence between a noble and learned lord (*Redesdale*), and another lord in Ireland (the Earl of *Fingal*.)

[HIS MAJESTY'S INDISPOSITION.]—The order was then read for their lordships to resolve into a committee on the Duke of *Yorke's* estate bill, and on the question being put,

The *Lord Chancellor* quitted the wool-sack, and observed, that relative to a bill of the peculiar nature of the present, his Majesty's concurrence was more especially necessary. He, therefore, rose for the purpose of informing the House, that he had the honour, yesterday, of an interview with his Majesty, and which was repeated this day; that he had informed his Majesty of the contents of this bill, and that his Majesty was graciously pleased to say, with reference to the same, that, as far as his Majesty's interest was concerned, their lordships might proceed with the bill.—The bill then passed the committee without observation or amendment, and was ordered to be reported to-morrow.

[IRISH BANK RESTRICTION BILL.]—On the motion for the second reading of the Bank of Ireland Restriction bill,

Lord King rose to state several observations, which he felt it his duty to do, as he had reason to hope they would be not wholly without their use, although he should not formally resist the motion. The discussion which had already taken place on this important subject, had, he was persuaded, produced much benefit. The principles he had frequently submitted to their lordships, were of that nature, that the more they were examined, the more conviction they carried with them; and so imperious was their necessity in the present circumstances of the nation, that he could not be too urgent with their lordships to give them their serious and repeated consideration. The state of Ireland grew daily into a stronger proof of the accuracy of his former arguments. He would call on every noble lord connected with that country, to give

testimony on the truth of that assertion. He wished those noble lords to lay before the House their own personal information on this subject; for it was his sincere desire, that the real grounds of his anxiety should be as plain to their lordships, as to himself. The fact was, that the bank paper in Ireland was so depreciated as to be at a discount of 10 per cent. It was falling every day into more discredit. The consequent distress was scarcely to be imagined. All articles of consumption rose so rapidly, and distrust was so generally spread, that the evil was most truly alarming. He called upon any one conversant with the internal affairs of Ireland, to deny what he asserted. But there was a proof of the depreciation of bank paper that could not be refuted, in the conduct of his Majesty's officers in Ireland. They paid themselves their salaries and pensions at par. If the Bank paper was good for that for which it was issued, why not take it themselves? No! for they knew they must lose 10 per cent. by it. If one of those officers had 100*l.* to receive, he knew it would produce him no more than 90*l.* if in bank paper; and, therefore, he took care to be paid at par. His lordship contended, if this was reasonable because of the depreciation, that all other persons should be paid in like manner. Whoever were not so paid, were defrauded. The depreciation, however, was established by the fact of those officers being paid at par; if it were not otherwise notorious. And this depreciation was the result of the bank being restricted from paying its issues in cash. If it were not so, he would be glad to hear what beside occasioned it. He knew that attempts were made to account for it otherwise. It was said that the disturbed state of the country, and the apprehension of invasion, were the causes. But fact was against this reasoning. In the last war, when there was an open rebellion in Ireland, when a French army was in the country, and a French fleet off the coast, the discount was only at 9 per cent. while in 1802, in time of peace, it was from 12 to 13 per cent. It is the quantity of paper issued by the Bank, that is the cause. Those issues have been rising in their monthly proportion from the time the restriction took place. In the last year they had increased beyond those in the preceding year, nearly 400,000*l.* They had increased, on the whole, to five times their amount at the time the bank restriction bill first passed. But they could not increase, in this enormous disproportion, without falling in their value. The reason is simple. There is no check against issuing bank notes beyond the

real demand for them, that is to say, beyond that capital they represent when the transaction is fair, but their being convertible, at the pleasure of the holder, into gold at the bank. This is a natural and inevitable check against improper issues; for, when such are attempted, the overflow of bank notes is apparent, the holders are alarmed, and go to the bank and demand cash. The check is, therefore, perfect. The bank finds this; and knows it cannot issue too many notes without the attempt recoiling on themselves. But, such is the delicate nature of this affair, that though this check is complete, no other can be found. Even the integrity of the directors themselves is no check; they cannot tell when the issues grow too large, if they are now convertible into cash. It was the custom of the Banks of England and Ireland, to keep a certain quantity of cash to answer current demands. After the passing of the bank restriction bill, they could replace that sum in their coffers by notes; for they must, thenceforth, pay notes with notes, and the money in their chests would produce interest. This compels an increased issue, and that depreciates the paper, and that again, by degrees, increases the issues. But there is no criterion by which to know when they get too far, because the overflow cannot be carried back to the Bank for cash. He meant to say, there was no simple criterion, without danger. There was a criterion, indeed, but it was a dangerous one. The depreciation proves the disproportioned issues; but that it is slow in its operation, as a proof, the fact at present too plainly proved. The directors, therefore, themselves meaning perfectly justly, may be very long before they discover that they have made too large issues. But, if there could be fraud supposed, to what ruinous extremes might not issues be carried? There being no criterion of their excess, but the disappearing of gold, and the depreciation of the notes, the palpable discovery of the excess, and the total annihilation of the notes, might be one and the same act. It was not to be forgotten, that the first depreciation of the notes was the only slow operation in this kind of transaction. After the first, the depreciation goes on rapidly, till they may suddenly crumble to dust, as has been seen in many instances, which their lordships would easily call to mind. He, therefore, conceived this to be a subject too weighty for their lordships to treat it otherwise than with the most solemn consideration. He did not mean to impute wrong to the mo-

tives of the Irish bank directors, for those enormous issues he had remarked. Their private characters were unimpeached. But he must say, they were extremely reprehensible in their public capacity, for the excess of the issues. Every man in Ireland who received 100*l.* was robbed, by the operation of that excess, of 10*l.*, while the bank proprietors were the only gainers by this system. Having no call for cash, they may employ their capital, producing interest; and their excess of paper producing interest also. Thus they had increased their dividend one per cent. within the last year, and the price of their stock was continually increasing. He had, on a former occasion, proposed that the Bank of Ireland should be compelled to pay their notes in Bank of England notes. Had this been adopted, there would not have been this discount on Bank of Ireland notes. The Bank of Scotland are compelled to pay in Bank of England notes; and their notes are at par. It would be the same with the Irish Bank, if it was under the same compulsion. It had been said, that, to obtain Bank of England notes, it must purchase them with gold; and, therefore, to compel it to pay in those notes was to compel it to pay in gold. But he denied that. The Irish Bank would purchase the Bank of England notes with bills of exchange, as all other articles of merchandise are bought. The sole effect would be to make the notes of the two banks convertible into each other, which they ought to be; and, therefore, to prevent the Bank of Ireland notes being at a discount. There was another great evil occasioned by the overflow of Bank of Ireland notes, which fell chiefly on the labouring classes of people. This was the forgery of these notes. To such length had this gone, that no person in the interior and remote parts of Ireland would take a bank note without the person's name who had it being indorsed on it. But of what use was this to the ignorant labourer in Connaught, who could not read? If his note was forged with which he went to buy bread, he could not read the names of those who seemed to stand as his pledges for its validity. The loss of forged notes, therefore, chiefly fell on the very poorest of the people. On the whole, his lordship maintained, that the present bill created all those evils he had stated, especially the depreciation of the bank notes, and the rate of exchange with this country. Of this latter, he would give one more eminent proof. In a quarter where the bank notes had not yet got into a general circulation, in the

north of Ireland, exchange was at par, or, he believed, something above par. He should not move the clause in the committee, to which he had alluded; but there were clauses in the bill on which he would take occasion to offer some observation.

The Earl of *Limerick* observed, that the noble lord had not thought proper to bring forward that charge against his Majesty's officers in Ireland, who had paid certain pensions and salaries at par, which he had threatened on a former night; and, therefore, he supposed his lordship had abandoned it, having found, on better information, that it was untenable. He had pledged himself, and would have been glad to have met his lordship on that charge. With respect to the bill, his lordship said, it was too late to discuss the policy of it, after passing the bank of England restriction bill. The Bank of Ireland must be restricted, as long as the Bank of England is. And it would be as unjust to demand of the Bank of Ireland to pay in cash, as to make that demand on the country private Banks. He had lost a great deal, as well as others, by the discount. He did not mean to trouble their lordships further; but he felt himself called upon to say thus much, by what fell from the noble lord.

Lord *King* rose to explain. He had never pledged himself to bring forward a charge against his Majesty's officers in Ireland, for paying at par. He only required to know the fact; without stating the use he meant to make of it. As to what he said to-night on the point of paying at par, he only observed incidentally, that those officers pay themselves at par, which was acknowledging that Bank of Ireland notes were not worth as much as they were issued for; and also, that they might have paid others at par as well as themselves.

Lord *Grenville* said, the noble Earl had made a strange assertion, when he said, it would be as unjust to ask the Bank of Ireland to pay in cash, as to make the same demand of the private and country banks. His lordship did not seem to be aware, that the legislature had never interfered, and God forbid it ever should, to enable private banks to pay their own issues in a depreciated circulation. To the noble lord who opened the debate, the country was highly indebted for bringing forward the discussion. He agreed with the noble lord, that much good had resulted from former discussions on this subject. The industry and talents employed by his lordship on this intricate question, had afforded much light to every impartial person. As to the

bill before the House, he had, on a former occasion, moved for certain papers, which, though not a positive rule to show the proportion between paper and cash, would have given a result sufficiently accurate. The House had negatived that motion. Of that negative he would say nothing; he would only observe, that since every door was to be shut, every information withheld, it would be better for their lordships to pass every measure without discussion; and he must add, that that was the only instance he ever knew in that House of such papers being denied. He had reason to believe, if the papers had been produced, they would have shown the proportion of paper over cash to be inconceivable. In one account which he had seen of a receiver-general of the land-tax, in 100l. he had received only 1l. in cash. He believed this case not to be singular. And the excess of paper, as he had argued on a former occasion, he believed to be owing chiefly to the operation of the bank restriction act. Since 1797, when that act passed, the issues of the bank of England had doubled, and those of the Bank of Ireland had grown to five times as much as they were at that period. It had been urged, that he was not consistent, in opposing this bill, since he was one of those with whom the measure originated. He owned the share he had in that. But he had contemplated it as a measure of necessity only, excused only by the peculiar circumstances which called for it. Because he had given it his approbation, first for a short period, then for the remainder of the last war, it did not follow that he was bound to prolong it during the peace, and afterwards again to the conclusion of the present war. And is it to be argued, that because he had recommended a temporary measure from necessity, he was to support it ever after? He would submit to no such argument. And, if he had seen, that this measure had produced great evil, and that the evil was increasing, he would say that he was the more bound to recommend the House now to recall it, for having been one to introduce it; nor would he shrink from his duty, from the dread of being deemed inconsistent. The noble earl used but one argument for the bill, which was since the Bank of England Restriction Bill is passed, you must also pass this. He believed that was too true. But he would argue from that, the necessity of revising the whole measure, of reconsidering the whole system. The subject could not be too often, too much dwelt upon by their lordships. It might be said, that the English Bank Restriction Bill cannot be

repealed this session; this was no reason for dismissing the policy of the bill without discussion. No one, he believed, would wish to see the bill rashly or hastily repealed. It must be done deliberately and with preparation. But their lordships might weigh the subject now and hereafter, and be prepared to re-establish the Bank on its old foundation, without any violation of their lordships' rules.—The threat of ruin that menaced from the present situation of the country, as to its circulation, was great. The recurring to the old system was the only road of safety. The ablest writer on subjects of this nature, who had reduced the chaos of maxims to a philosophical order and luminous principles, Dr. A. Smith, had said, there were two sorts of paper, distinct in their character from each other, the former, by which the great dealers carried on their traffic, and the other, by which the consumer bought of the small dealer. When the latter paper, he adds, comes to be prevalent, the nation is in great danger; and if, in such a case, it be invaded, it is impossible to contemplate the consequences without horror. The case put by this great man seemed to be nearly completing. In Ireland, the depreciation of the circulation is already very great; here there are symptoms of depreciation of the circulation. There is nothing to be seen between the consumer and dealer but paper. What Dr. Smith deprecated has arrived in part, and the rest is hastening on.—Need he inform their lordships why the able writer spoke with such terror of an invasion, with such previous circumstances? it is because the only medium by which the great bulk of the nation, the labouring people, can procure bread, in such a case, is a paper circulation, which is annihilated instantaneously by an invasion. Suppose the enemy landed, and in possession of a town on the sea coast, which has a bank, the centre of a district; that is, whose notes are the only circulation for 20 or 30 miles round. The notes would (for the moment at least) be annihilated, and the entire labouring class would be reduced, not merely to beggary, but to want. The horror of such a scene is too great to be pictured. He would give their lordships an instance, which might shew what was to be expected in case of actual invasion. A report was spread in the town of Newcastle, that the enemy was landed. Instantly there was a run on all the banks of that town. The proprietors were obliged to send messengers post to London, not for Bank of England notes, they would go no more than the country notes, but for gold. The shock was given all the way

from Newcastle to London, and produced the like effects. If such was the result of an alarm, what would an actual invasion do? Their lordships would easily conceive, by carrying their eyes forward to the rapid and destructive progress such things make.—His lordship proceeded to point out the injurious effects which the restriction originally imposed on the Bank of England had produced in Ireland, by occasioning a similar restriction on the bank there. Not only had it operated to the disadvantage of merchants in their pecuniary transactions, but peculiarly grievous was it to the middling and lower orders of the community, by whom the depreciation of the paper currency, which was forced upon them by virtue of this new restriction, was felt as an actual diminution of their income, and the consequent enhancement of the price of the necessaries of life. He again deprecated the idea of the present being taken up as a party question, or connected with any set of politics. He viewed it in its consequences as materially involving the welfare of the bulk of the people in the United Kingdom of Ireland, upon whom the want of a sufficient quantity of the circulating medium of coin produced the most distressing consequences, and diffused a spirit of dissatisfaction, complaint, and penury, and which the proposed continuance of this restriction on the bank, his lordship considered, as ill-calculated to retrieve.—After expatiating upon these topics considerably in detail, his lordship expressed his satisfaction at the appointment of an inquiry into the subject in Ireland, and his earnest wish was, that an investigation should be set on foot on the part of both Houses, as the subject affected G. Britain as well as Ireland. It was by no means, as he had before observed, too late, and one great object for consideration, in endeavouring to remedy the evils of an excessive paper circulation, should be, a gradual taking off the restriction upon the bank: that corporation should be enabled, but gradually, to resume their cash payments: not, however, without due and full notice being given. The withdrawing of the small notes from circulation, would necessarily induce the introduction of cash to the like amount, to fill up the chasm; this, of course, should not be hastily done.—Suppose, he observed, that within 3 months the one pound notes were to be called in, and, in another subsequent interval, the notes of two pound, the most salutary effects would be produced in reference to what he had suggested. These were, however, only parts of the outline which might be recommended to the attention of a general committee of inquiry, the

expediency of which, under the present circumstances of the country, the noble lord solemnly and impressively enforced.

Lord *Hankesbury* observed that the arguments produced by the noble lord did not in his opinion, warrant the conclusion which was attempted to be drawn. An investigation into the affairs of the Bank of Ireland, would, in the present circumstances of the country, produce an injurious rather than a beneficial effect. No case had been made out which was sufficient to justify such an interference. The inconveniences which it would produce and the alarm which it would excite throughout the country, would far more than counterbalance any supposed advantages which would attend it. The bill of restriction which it had been found necessary to continue for some years past, was, he was ready to confess, not a measure in itself desirable, but which was found necessary to prevent greater inconveniences than if such a bill had not passed. The experience of a few years had pointed out the expediency of such a measure, nor did he apprehend it was politically safe and advisable in the present state of warfare, and when the minds of many were alarmed with the threats of invasion, to revert to the old system of admitting payments in specie to be demanded of the Bank. It was true, that a considerable increase in the quantity of notes had been issued by the Bank of Ireland since the measure of restricting the payment in specie had been adopted. It was to be observed at the same time, that this did not produce a proportionate decrease in the quantity of the current coin, and this his lordship thought could be clearly proved from an examination of various official documents, some of which he held in his hand, and from facts which had occurred in the history of coining in this country.—In the year 1793, the number of provincial banks were at least 400, and within a given period after the restriction was laid on, they were in number from 350 to 360. He contended that the paper circulation did not tend to drive the coin out of the country. A diminution of the cash in the country, to whatever degree it may occasionally take place, was attributable to very different causes; it may arise from the balance of trade and of payments, which, as they were in favour or against a country, tended either to extract cash or to cause an influx of it. The demands for coin at the mint were, during his Majesty's reign, and more especially the latter part of it, incomparably greater than at any former periods: during the present reign, the coinages exceeded 64,000,000l.; in his late Majesty's

reign 11,000,000l.; in that of George I. 8,000,000l.; of Queen Anne 2,000,000l.; and in King William's reign 10,000,000l.; for the last twenty years 32,000,000l. were coined. So much for the amount of specie coined and circulated within the country, at different periods. On this ground, therefore, no deficiency could have happened, as to the quantity of the current coin. The scarcity which had arisen must have operated from extraneous and temporary circumstances. Such were the two years of scarcity during the years 1796 and 1797; in addition to which large sums were sent out of the country in the way of loans, or foreign subsidies, during the war in which this country was then engaged. But when bountiful seasons afterwards succeeded, and the continental war drew to a close, money never became more plentiful. This was particularly the case during the latter part of 1797 and 1798; and that, too, at a period when the restriction from payment in specie was imposed upon the Bank of England. These considerations sufficiently proved that the stoppage of the bank was not the cause of the evil complained of, but that it was owing to the large remittances in cash which had been sent to foreign countries in purchase of corn, and which amounted to several millions, and to the large subsidies and loans to foreign princes, as well as to the considerable sums sent for the support of our armies in foreign parts. In 1799 another unfavourable season occurred, which produced effects still more injurious than the former, and this was again succeeded by a similar bad harvest in 1800. During these two years, no less a sum than between 20 and 30 million had been paid to foreign countries for corn and other articles of provision, which produced, of course, a great effect in the balance of trade with other countries. Added to which, in 1799, the continental war was renewed, fresh treaties were entered into, and fresh loans and subsidies were sent to foreign powers, without also taking into the account the very considerable expense which was incurred, and the sums sent abroad on account of the Egyptian armament. All these causes had more or less their combined influence to produce that scarcity of cash which had been so much complained of throughout the country. In the present perplexed state of our trade with foreign parts, a temporary interruption had been occasioned with respect to those remittances which our merchants had reason to expect. It came, however, within his own knowledge, that there are, at this very moment, large sums of

bullion in store, in several towns on the Continent, and intended to be sent to this country as soon as circumstances would admit of a conveyance. His lordship observed, that at the commencement of the war in 1793, there was no considerable want of coin in this country; and even up to 1795 this inconvenience was not felt. He had already stated those causes which occasioned the inconveniency in the years 1795 and 1796, and some of the succeeding years. His lordship begged, however, to be understood, as not arguing in favour of a too extended paper circulation, for he was sensible that this might be pushed too far. But, even in this case, he was not aware how far an appropriate remedy could be adopted. He felt rather inclined to refer that remedy to the natural course of events, than to produce alterations in the political machine, which he was apprehensive would rather do mischief than produce a benefit. Speculators, indeed, might suffer; but he thought it was better to leave the evil to work its own cure, than to hold out encouragement to persons of this description.—With respect to the supposable event which the noble lord (Grenville) has alluded to of an invasion by the enemy, and coupling, as his lordship did, this circumstance with that of the paper circulation, he could only say that he knew of no attempt to remedy such an evil but what might tend to produce a still greater one, and such he considered would be the impracticable attempt of forcing the country banks to combine together in support of each other. In this case the effects would be most alarming and ruinous to those banks which might not meet with such support. Banks solvent to-day must, in such a case, become insolvent to-morrow. But as to the argument of the noble lord, derived from the supposition of invasion, it might be sufficient to observe, in the first place, that such an evil might never actually happen; and 2ndly, that a partial invasion could not be an evil so as to produce financial embarrassments, and pecuniary distress to any great extent. But even supposing an invading army were to obtain a temporary footing in the country, he did not apprehend that even in that case it would produce that dreadful effect upon the credit of the country, and of individuals, which had been supposed. In support of this opinion his lordship referred back to two periods in the history of this country, when, in addition to a foreign invasion, it had also to encounter internal enemies, and who had penetrated into the very heart of the country. He meant the years 1715 and 1745. Upon a retrospec-

tion to the latter of these periods, he did not find the list of bankrupts to be greater that year than in the preceding or subsequent one. He acknowledged that the circumstances between those times and the present were not altogether similar; but however it was owing to the same public spirit which supported public credit then, which he had no doubt would show itself now, if circumstances called for it, and would not fail to produce a similar effect.—As to Ireland, that country stood upon a different footing from this in various respects; but in this there was an agreement, that so long as it was judged proper that the restriction from payment in specie should be imposed upon the Bank of England, it would be found necessary that the same should be continued on the Bank of Ireland.

The Earl of *Carnarvon* said, that none of the arguments of the noble lord who had just sat down, satisfied him of the necessity of the measure now proposed for the adoption of their lordships. The restriction in question was adopted only as a temporary measure, and as a remedy adapted to the then circumstances of the country, but no argument could from thence be inferred, that this restriction was not to be removed as soon as possible. He differed from the opinion which the noble lord seemed to adopt, as if the forced circulation of paper currency would not force the circulation of specie out of the kingdom; for, as soon as the latter got out of circulation, it would, no doubt, be sent abroad, although it would, no doubt, return again, not as coin, but as bullion. The restriction on the Bank, though at first adopted as a temporary measure, yet, from its having been renewed year after year, would naturally produce the effect of inducing the Bank not to keep so much ready cash as it would otherwise do; and this very circumstance was one cause of the scarcity of the circulating medium. His lordship contended that before this bill passed, evidence ought to be produced, that the causes which imposed the restriction upon the Bank at first, still continued. It seemed clear enough that these renewed restrictions had not attained the end originally proposed, namely, the retaining within the kingdom, a sufficient quantity of the circulating medium for the public service, nor would this end be answered till the Bank renewed its payments. And with respect to Ireland, if it should appear that the situation in which that country found itself, was owing to the previous restrictions which had been imposed on the Bank of England, this, his lordship said, was an ad-

ditional reason in his mind for altering the system which had been adopted respecting it.

Lord Auckland supported the motion. He considered the present state of the Bank, both of England and Ireland, as a solecism in the history of finance. There was no less than 20 millions of papers in circulation, for which the holders could only require payment in the same kind. He confessed when the measure of the Bank restriction was first adopted, he did not foresee that at the distance of 7 years they would be again discussing the same measure.—With regard to the situation of Ireland, its paper was in a most unfortunate state, and he was very happy to find that a committee had been moved for in another place, by a right hon. gent. of the greatest talents (Foster), and who thoroughly understood the subject. If it were possible to afford any Parliamentary relief to Ireland, he was sure there was no person more able to point it out than the right hon. gent. to whom he alluded.—He did not agree with those who thought that no advantage could result from the appointment of committees of this kind, for if they were not able to suggest every practical measure that could be adopted, at least they put the House in possession of facts that could be depended upon, and upon which they might form their judgment.—With regard to the state of exchange of Ireland, for the last 5 years, more money had flowed into Ireland from this country, than had been drawn from it in consequence of the loans which she had made in this country, and the balance of trade, if carefully examined, would not, he was sure, be found to be against Ireland. Therefore, it was not a real exchange against Ireland, but a depreciation of her paper, because if a person were to pay a hundred pounds in Ireland, in Bank of England notes, or a hundred guineas, he would obtain a draft upon England for the whole amount, without any deduction. With regard to the bill before the house, he should give his vote for going into the committee, because, in the present situation of affairs, he did not see how the restriction could be taken off the Bank of Ireland.

Lord Carysfort was against the bill, considering the present circumstances of both countries. When the restriction of the Bank of England was first laid on the notes issued by it amounted to between 6 and 700,000, but now they amounted to more than 2 millions. The difficulty would be greater now to the Bank if the restriction were taken off; but whilst it was to be taken into consideration, on the one hand, the

loss which the Bank of Ireland would sustain by resuming payment in specie (and in which case it ought to have the assistance of the government), so on the other hand it ought to be seriously weighed, the enormous loss which is sustained by the whole of the people of Ireland, by the considerable depreciation of their paper money. It was impossible to calculate the vast extent of the mischief which was occasioned by this circumstance. The incomes of the people of Ireland were already lowered ten per cent. and this alone was a greater injury than any which the Bank of Ireland could sustain, by resuming its payments. Besides which, it ought to be considered, the corporation of the bank must feel an interest in what so nearly concerns the welfare of the whole people of Ireland. In Gt. Britain, although Parliament has restrained the issue of coin from the bank, yet it has put no restraint on the medium of circulation between one part of the kingdom and another; but for the people of Ireland no common medium is provided, by which they can carry on their commerce with facility; this was felt by Ireland as a great evil, and he thought it was incumbent upon Parliament to provide a remedy. A noble lord (Hawkesbury) had admitted the existence of the evil, but it was with concern he heard him speak so doubtfully as to the practicability of the remedy. This did not sound like the language of an able statesman and politician, for it was the duty of such to seek for, and to apply such remedy as the exigency of the case might require.—The present bill, his lordship was convinced, would only prolong the cause and increase the effect. For the first time, it was continued during the war, and not made annual as former bills. For these and other reasons, he was against its going into the committee. As to the noble secretary's assertion, that the number of banks were diminished, this was no proof that the quantity of paper was; indeed from the instances of increase in the Bank of England and Bank of Ireland, it might more fairly be inferred the reverse. With respect to his lordship's theory, he said, that actual balances of issues had been all along in favour of Ireland; and if so, on those principles she would not experience any scarcity of coin.

The Lord Chancellor conceived, that few of the observations which had been entered into by noble lords, had application to the question then before the House, which was, whether the present bill should go into a committee? And what was the object of that bill? Nothing more than to continue in Ireland a regulation which had been adopted

ed, and still continues in *Gt. Britain*; and which, while it exists in one country, must exist in another. He should consider himself as doing the greatest injustice and injury, not only to the bank, but to all the people of *Ireland*, if he did not assent to the measure. As a member of the *United Parliament* he felt himself bound to embrace (if he might be allowed the expression) with a fraternal care, the interests of the people of that country, and to see that their commercial concerns should not receive any sudden or dangerous shock; which must be the case if all the parties belonging to banking concerns in that country were to be now rendered liable to pay in specie. He was also one of those who had originally supported the present measure.—While he was speaking upon this subject, he could not help taking notice of the practice which had prevailed for several years, of passing acts only for a short time, and renewing them successively, for short periods. It was a practice highly mischievous and injurious to the independence of *Parliament* itself; because it begot a habit of inattention and negligence on the part of Members of *Parliament*, to subjects on which they were bound to exercise a degree of parliamentary jealousy; because, conceiving they might have an opportunity of opposing a particular measure every time of its renewal, they neglected to oppose it at all. He, therefore, would always wish to see laws passed in the first instance, for as long a period as it might be conceived necessary for them to exist.—He admitted there was great weight in what had fallen from a noble lord (*Grenville*) near him, as to the expediency of taking off the restriction; but, supposing that to be done, it was necessary that it should be done gradually. Now, if this bill was frustrated, it would be obvious that the restriction would be wholly removed, and that suddenly. So, too, with respect to the sentiments of another noble lord (*Carysfort*) who complained of the prolonged duration of the bill; it was clear that all question on that point would be best discussed in the committee. He professed not to understand how the restriction on the Banks could diminish the quantity of cash in circulation, more than the differences between the actual issue of notes and the issue at the time of the restriction taking place; or suppose the issues then 12,000,000, are now 18,000,000. According to this view, the diminution of cash, owing to this cause, could only be 6,000,000. With respect to the accounts moved for by a noble lord (*Grenville*), to shew in what currency the payment of

the taxes was made, he had opposed it, because they could not be made up in time: of the result he had no doubt. He conceived the principle circulation of Bank notes was in the metropolis, and within ten miles; in all other parts, nine-tenths of the circulation was in private bank notes.—A great deal had been said on the subject of notes issued by private bankers. But it should be recollected, that on these there was a powerful check against the too extensive issue of paper. If the holders of their notes came to demand cash for them, Bankers might tender the notes of the *National Bank* in payment: these might be refused: the debtors in the mean time were privileged only from arrest; but if the creditors still insisted on cash, and there was none to give them, the bankers must ultimately be thrown into prison. The private bankers were principally supported by credit; and that credit rested on the property they were supposed to possess, as being sufficient to answer the demands upon them. Such persons when they had a sufficient capital, were unquestionably very useful men. It might happen sometimes that the holders of such private paper, if they chose to act up to all the severity which the law allowed them, would make a sudden demand on the bank from which the paper issued; and that demand could not be satisfied, because the property that was to support the credit of the firm, must have been laid out in different securities, and could not be collected in sufficient time to answer those sudden demands. What then would be the consequence of such demands? That the persons making them must bring ruin not only to the debtors, but probably lose all chance of obtaining the amount of their demand. A system of credit and good faith must therefore be kept up in the country; and it might receive the most dreadful shock from any sudden change, such as would follow the rejection of the bill then before the House. It was a most fortunate circumstance for the trade and commerce of this country, that paper credit existed to the extent it did, and that mercantile men reposed such confidence in each other. As a proof of the existence of such credit, he would desire any man who wanted to raise the sum of 2,000*l.* on a landed estate, to call on all the monied men from *Temple Bar* to *White-chapel*, and he would find that not one of these would advance the money on the security of his estate, until he had employed attorneys and special pleaders to inquire into all the titles, and examine all the deeds by virtue of which he held it. But let him

fill his pockets with bills drawn by mercantile men, even to an amount much beyond the sum of 2,000*l.* and provided they were drawn by fair and reputable traders, every one of them would be accepted without a moment's hesitation.—These observations must convince the House of the necessity of carefully abstaining from any sudden and violent measure, by which the system of public credit might be affected. Perhaps it might be said, that it was necessary to put a stop to the circulation of paper, for which there existed no sort of security whatever. This circumstance put him in mind of a species of paper, which was very frequently issued in the country, known by the name of "accommodation bills." It was no uncommon practice for persons who had not one shilling property, that could serve as a security, to draw bills, which bills were accepted by others, and endorsed by others again, all equally destitute of property. These were circulated through the country to the great injury of those through whose hands they passed. In the exercise of his professional duty he had an opportunity of knowing an instance of one house having issued bills of this kind to the amount of 400,000*l.* without half a farthing property to support it. It was easy to see (acquiring goods with this issue of paper) how the proprietors might grow rich, but, at the same time, how others would grow poor indeed!—He conceived discussions on these subjects useful, and though he could not agree with the noble lords who opposed the motion, he had listened to what fell from them as well as others, with satisfaction and improvement. The restriction was originally an evil prescribed by necessity. The national banks were enabled to pay their own notes with others of their own: it was however, a mistake to suppose that private bankers could, or even with Bank of England notes. They were compellable to pay in cash, and were only exempted from arrest on tender of Bank of England notes; but if afterwards sued to judgment, they were compelled to pay the cash. This was a hard case, and a great exercise of power in the legislature; but so it was, and not as seemed generally conceived, that private bankers were not obliged to pay in cash. However hard, he was among those who originally advised the measure, as the lesser evil of the two, and indeed as prescribed by an over-ruling necessity of the case.—Lord King said a few words in explanation; after which the question was put and carried, and the bill ordered to be committed to-morrow.—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, March 5.

[MINUTES.] Mr. Adams brought up the Report of the Royal Marine Mutiny bill, which was read and agreed to; and the bill ordered to be read a third time to-morrow.—The Irish Priests and Deacons' orders bill was read a second time, and committed for Wednesday.—The Mutiny bill was read a third time and passed.—The Scotch Creditors bill passed through a committee. The report was received, read, and agreed to, and the bill ordered to be read a third time to-morrow.—The committees of supply and ways and means were postponed till Wednesday.—Mr. Corry moved for a committee of the whole House to-morrow, to consider further of the Irish duty acts. The object for consideration would be, he said, the duties on Salt, Hops, and Coals. Ordered.—Mr. Corry brought up the Irish duties bill, and the Irish countervailing duties bill, which were severally read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.

[MALT DUTIES.]—Mr. *Western* said, that an apprehension having prevailed that the duties on beer were intended to be reduced, and an additional duty laid on malt, he wished to be informed whether any such measure was in contemplation.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he had no hesitation in giving the right hon. gent. an explicit answer. There was no intention on the part of his Majesty's ministers to propose any additional duties on Malt, nor any reduction on those of Beer.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, March 6.

[MINUTES.]—Counsel were heard at some length relative to the appeal cause from the Court of Exchequer in Ireland: William Stewart and others *v.* Edward Young; viz. Messrs. Alexander and Fonblanque for the appellants, and Messrs. Romilly and Stephens on the part of the respondent. The farther hearing of the case was adjourned till to-morrow.—The Marine Mutiny Bill, and the Scotch Bankrupt Law Bill, were brought up from the Commons by Mr. Vansittart and others, and severally read a first time.—The bills upon the table were forwarded in their respective stages: among these were the Duke of York's Estate bill, the report of which was agreed to. The Mutiny bill was read a second time, and ordered to be read a third time to-morrow.—The London Port Bill was read a third time and passed.

[IRISH BANK RESTRICTION BILL.]—Their lordships then went upon the order

of the day for committing the Bank of Ireland Restriction bill, and accordingly the House resolved into a committee, Lord Walsingham in the chair.

Lord Auckland took the opportunity afforded by the reading of one of the clauses, to offer a few observations upon the measure. He was of opinion that some limitation should be set to the issue of the Bank of Ireland paper; and he should have felt it a serious public duty to have called the attention of the house forcibly to the subject, were it not that the provisions in the bill set his mind at ease, under the present circumstances, upon that part of the subject. Of that clause which empowered the legislature to alter, modify, or repeal the bill, in the course of the present session, he particularly approved. Without these salutary provisions, he was open to acknowledge that he should feel some apprehensions respecting the issue of Irish Bank paper; the excessive issue of which, he entertained no doubt, was the principal cause of the great depreciation of the currency in that part of the United Kingdom. He calculated there was at present six times the amount of paper in circulation that there had been prior to the restriction upon the Bank; indeed, that an excessive issue should cause a depreciation, resulted from the very nature of things, as a glut in the market of any commodity tended to lower the price.

Lord Hawkesbury expressed his coincidence in opinion with the noble lord, as to a part of his observations, but not with respect to the whole of them. He was at present averse from giving an opinion either affirmatively or negatively, as to the real cause of the depreciation of the Irish currency; and in like manner he would then refrain from stating a decided opinion upon the point of an inquiry being set on foot in that House, similar to what was instituted in the other House of Parliament. With respect to a general investigation of the subject, the inclination of his opinion was, that under the present circumstances of the country, such a proceeding would be upon the whole, rather injurious than beneficial. He thought, however, it would be preferable to wait the result of the pending inquiry, before any proceeding or measure of importance, relative to the subject, should be adopted in that House. He was of the noble lord's opinion as to the expediency of a provision in the bill, enabling Parliament to modify or alter the measure during the present session.

Lord King stated, that he had to propose the insertion of a clause in the bill, explanatory of a provision which had been made in

the bill of restriction, originally passed in the Parliament of Ireland, and had been since regularly enacted in the subsequent bills: the effect of this provision his lordship described, went to prohibit the recovery of costs in actions brought against the Irish bank directors, but which he understood had been acted upon in such a way in some of the Irish courts of law, as he was inclined to think, could not have been the sense of the Irish legislature at the period of the enactment. His lordship instanced the case where a note was suspected to be fictitious, by one of the clerks of the Bank: it was the custom to refuse payment of the note, in the first instance, at least; and these notes were frequently marked, in red ink, "forged," by the clerk. In some instances of this kind, payment was insisted upon by the presenter of the note, who, in the event of recurrence to a court of justice, proved the goodness of the note, at least in the opinion of the Jury; or sometimes the validity of the note was acknowledged on the part of the Bank. In the cases he alluded to, the costs were withheld, by reason of the clause in question. Such he understood to have been the practice, and he doubted not the concurrence of their lordships in opinion with him, that such a provision ought to be properly explained, and in the particular cases to which he had alluded, to enact the recovery of cost.

Lord Carleton observed, that this was the first time he had heard of the proceedings stated by the noble lord, as far as related to the withholding costs; possibly such decisions might have taken place in the Irish law courts. He did not pledge himself to the negative, but he assured the committee he had never heard of any such. Upon the authority before their lordships, he thought it would be going too far to enact the provision proposed by the noble lord. In the state of darkness in that respect, in which they then were, he thought it would be preferable to let the act remain as it stood, and that they should wait until inquiries shall have been made, and the facts ascertained, previous to their taking any legislative steps upon the subject.

The Lord Chancellor expressed his thorough acquiescence in what fell from the noble and learned lord: he thought the subject one of very serious importance; it would be preferable, as things stood, to let the bill remain as it was, than to enact the provision proposed by the noble lord. The suitors in the alternative alluded to, had the appellant's jurisdiction to resort to. His lordship also was adverse to such a step being taken, without full and adequate in-

formation on the subject, relating to the character of the administration of justice in another part of the United Kingdom, which was a point of considerable importance. He concluded by recommending the noble lord under the present circumstances to withdraw the motion.—Lord King, after a few words in explanation, consented to withdraw his motion.—When one of the subsequent clauses was come to,

Lord King again rose, and made some general observations upon the injurious effects of excessive issue of paper in Ireland, as well in reference to the course of exchange, as the depreciation of the currency. Under these impressions, he proposed the introduction of a clause tending to set a limit to the issue of paper by the Bank of Ireland: his clause would go to fix the limit of the paper issue to the amount it was on the 25th Nov. last, the latest period to which the accounts were made up: this would give room for even an excessive issue, as it was upwards of 2,900,000*l.* which was 300,000*l.* more than what it was in the year 1802. He entered into calculations respecting the injurious effect the increased issue had on the state of the exchange, and concluded by moving a clause to the above effect.

Lord Hawkesbury deemed it his duty to resist the adoption of the clause proposed by the noble lord, against which he argued, chiefly on the ground of the impropriety of legislating on such a principle in bills of the description of that before the house. It would go to legalize and to sanction the issue of paper to a particular amount, to a degree beyond what the legislature could intend to do in such a case; and further, it would be giving an express opinion on the part of the legislature, as to the precise amount to which the issue of bills should extend. Under the present circumstances, he thought it would be preferable to trust to the discretion of the bank directors, which he thought would be soundly used, and their issue regulated according to circumstances, which was the case with the Bank of England, sometimes more and sometimes less; fluctuating in their issues, with a reference to existing circumstances. Such a provision was the less necessary, when the controlling powers of the clauses in the bill alluded to in an early part of the discussion, were considered. He hoped the noble lord did not mean to press the clause.

Earl Darnley said, he did not mean then to give any opinion upon the points under discussion. He entertained a favourable opinion of the Irish Bank directors, who he trusted would not make an improper use

of the discretion vested in them; but he thought it would be best to wait until the result of the pending inquiry was known, and not to take any legislative step which may have the appearance of prejudging the question.—Lord King shortly explained his reasons for wishing to adhere to his proposition. The question thereon was put, and negatived. The remaining parts of the bill were then agreed to by the committee, and the House resuming, ordered the report to be received to-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, March 6.

[MINUTES.]—Sir John Anderson brought up a bill for making provision for widening the entrance into the City of London by way of Temple Bar, for erecting buildings at Snow-hill, and for raising further sums of money on the credit of the Orphan's Fund, for that purpose. Read a first and ordered to be read a second time.—The Scotch creditors bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be carried to the lords on the motion of Mr. Wm. Dundas.—Mr. Corry moved the order of the day for the House to go into a committee of the whole House, to consider of the Irish revenue acts, as far as they related to Salt, Hops, and Coals. The House being in a committee accordingly, Mr. Corry briefly stated, that the duty on Salt, which was now to be proposed, was precisely the same without any variation whatever, as he had formerly stated when that subject was before the House. The other objects were those of Hops and Coals. He then moved his resolutions, which were put and carried on the subject of Salt: after which he moved two other resolutions, for a duty of 7*s.* 7*d.* Irish currency, upon every harrel of Irish Malt; and a countervailing duty to the same amount, on every barrel of Malt imported into Ireland, from the 24th March, 1804 to the 24th of March 1805, which passed.—The House being resumed, the report was ordered to be received to-morrow.—Mr. Foster moved, "That there be laid before the House an account of the existing duties now payable on the several articles contained in the resolutions of the committee of the whole House, reported on the 3rd of March instant, specifying each article on the several acts, &c. and the amount payable under each act, &c." Which was ordered accordingly.—Mr. Corry then moved the order of the day for the second reading of the Irish duty bill. The bill was accordingly read a second time, and ordered to be committed to a committee of the whole House on Thursday next.—Mr. Corry then moved

the order of the day for the second reading of the Irish countervailing duty bill. The bill was accordingly read a second time, and ordered to be committed to a committee of the whole House on Thursday next.—The royal marine mutiny bill was read a third time, and passed on the motion of Mr. Vansittart.—Mr. Creevey gave notice that to-morrow week he should make a motion for papers respecting the war in Ceylon.—Mr. Francis also gave notice of a motion on the same day, relative to the war in India.

[NAVY BOARD.]—Sir *William Elford* observed, that he had some time ago, before the last recess, given notice that he should, after the recess, bring forward a motion that would have reference to the Navy Board; but since he gave that notice various circumstances came to his knowledge, which he apprehended he could not introduce under the form of the motion as he originally intended to make it. A right hon. gent. (Mr. Pitt) had also given notice he intended to bring forward a proposition relative to the naval defence of this country. He therefore wished to wait to find what the nature of that proposition was, for that under the discussion of it, he might possibly introduce what he had formerly intended upon this matter; he would wait for that opportunity; and if he could not then do what he intended, he should give another notice of the time he should bring it forward.

[VOLUNTEER CONSOLIDATION BILL.]—Mr. Secretary *Yorke* moved the recommitment of the Volunteer Consolidation Bill. The House resolved itself into a committee, in which a variety of amendments were made. Some of the most prominent of the amendments are the following. An amendment proposed by Mr. Pitt, for an alteration in the expression in one of the exemption clauses, from 24 days service, to be returned in three muster-rolls, at a distance of four months between each, to 24 days service within the year, without specifying the particular time, as a necessary claim to exemption.

Mr. *Pitt* proposed another amendment, the purport of which was, that the lord lieutenants of counties, or other persons who have the regulation of the ballots for the militia and other forces, should be instructed to apportion the quotas of men to be raised in each district with a view to the number of volunteers that were raised within the district, and not by the circuitous mode of drawing off the population, then admitting of exemptions on account of service in the volunteer corps, and recur-

ring to another ballot to complete the number, as is at present the mode of drawing for such forces. After a great deal of conversation, it was agreed that the point should be further discussed on the next report of the bill.—Upon the clause which states that volunteers who shall be discharged from neglect or any other cause, shall be liable to the operation of the ballot towards the other services, a good deal of conversation took place, in the course of which Mr. Secretary *Yorke* observed, that any volunteer who served till the end of the war was meant to be secured from any ballot which might then take place.

Lord *Castlereagh* threw out for the consideration of members more conversant with the progress of balloting than he was, how any volunteer who might resign or be discharged, and who might have been previously balloted, and exempted in consequence of his being a member of a volunteer corps, was to be disposed of; that is to say, whether such person was to go to the proportion of the parish to which he might originally belong, or was to become the property of the country? This was a case which according to his judgment, ought to be decided on by Parliament.—After a few words from Sir *W. Geary*, the words “or other misbehaviour,” as proposed by Mr. *G. Vansittart* were added to the clause.

On the clause that such adjutants, sergeants, corporals, and drummers belonging to volunteers corps as receive permanent pay, should be subject to martial law, and to be tried by courts martial, a very long and desultory conversation arose.

Mr. *Rose* was of opinion, that no such courts martial could be regularly instituted, unless when the volunteers should be on permanent duty, because the order for executing any courts martial must be issued by the commander in chief, who could have no control over the volunteers until called out into actual service.

Mr. Secretary *Yorke* said, that the clause was framed on the same principle as that which prevailed in the militia, among whom the description of persons who were alluded to in the clause were subject to be tried by martial law, even when the militia were in a disembodied state.

Mr. *Rose* stated, that he had heard it observed that courts martial could not be legally instituted to try any persons belonging to the militia when they were in a disembodied state.

Mr. Secretary *Yorke* referred the right hon. gent. to the 42d of his Majesty, where the contrary was expressly enacted.

To a question, whether it was intended to

make any allowance to drill serjeants of volunteer infantry?

Mr. Secretary *Yorke* replied, that this subject was under consideration, and that he was not yet able to say how the allowance, which it was deemed expedient to make to the description of persons alluded to, was to be provided for; whether by an assessment upon the parish or united parishes to which the volunteer corps might belong, by a general county rate, or in any other, or what way.

Mr. *Tierney* proposed, that the armourers of volunteer corps should also be subject to be tried by martial law.—To this amendment Mr. C. Wynne and Mr. Curwen objected, and upon the recommendation of Mr. Yorkè, the consideration was postponed for the present.

Mr. *Raine* asked, whether it was intended that this clause should comprehend such serjeants, &c. as were paid by the corps to which they belonged, or by their commanding officers, as well as those who received their pay from the public purse?

Mr. Secretary *Yorke* observed, that the clause was not new, but perfectly the same as that which had been enacted in the 42nd of the King.

Mr. C. *Wynne* said, that if the law was old, it was rather surprising that he should have been told at the office of the right hon. gent., to which he had some time since occasion to resort, respecting the conduct of a certain drill serjeant who had actually attempted to stir up mutiny in a volunteer corps, that such drill serjeant could not be tried by martial law.

Mr. Secretary *Yorke* recollected the case alluded to by the hon. gent., and that the reason of the reply which was given upon that case was, that the drill serjeant, respecting whom the complaint was preferred, did not belong to the corps, but was merely employed to instruct it.

Sir *W. Geary* here took occasion to observe, that it was improper that any person in arms should have regular pay from any other source than that of government.

Upon the clause being read, that any volunteer who should not come forward in the event of invasion or rebellion, should be treated as a deserter.

Lord *Ossulstone* proposed the addition of these words, "when the same shall be signified" by his Majesty's proclamation.—This amendment was adopted.

Mr. *Pitt* then brought forward his promised proposition, that the volunteers should be invited to go on permanent duty, for the purpose of improvement, for any

time from seven to 21 days, and that during such period, they should be subject to martial law. Of this he conceived that no volunteer could complain, nor could any objection be advanced against it, as it was to be recollected that it was at the option of every volunteer to engage in such duty or not. The right hon. gent. then proposed the addition of these words, "or on being placed on permanent duty for any stated number of days, for the purpose of improvement in military exercise, with the concurrence of his Majesty."—Agreed to.

To a question from Mr. Pitt as to the intention of ministers respecting the bounty to be allowed to volunteers going on permanent duty, whether such bounty was to be deducted from the marching money fixed for the event of invasion or rebellion, or to be an additional grant, no answer was given, and the right hon. gent. announced his purpose of bringing forward the subject again at a proper time.

When the clause was read which relates to the appointment of general officers to command volunteer corps when called into actual service,

Colonel *Elford* objected to it as an improper interference with the royal prerogative, which could, in the event of invasion, call his subjects to arms, and place them under the command of such officers as it might be his pleasure to appoint.

Mr. Secretary *Yorke* stated, that an exemption from such an operation of the royal prerogative, was one of the conditions upon which the volunteers had originally engaged to serve.

General *Tarleton* took occasion to observe that, as he had been informed, there was a difference of opinion between the right hon. gent. who brought this measure forward, and most of the colonel commandants of the volunteer corps as to some points of law by which the volunteer system was supposed to be regulated; if that was so, the better way would be for that right hon. gent. to state his opinion upon the law to the committee, in order that the matter might be settled; and all disagreements done away.

Mr. Secretary *Yorke* said, that the law upon the subject to which the hon. general had referred, was not at all doubtful. When out on actual invasion, the volunteers, like all other parts of our military force, would be under the command of general officers of the line, but not unless they were out. They had, however, consented in many instances to be in some measure under the command of officers of the line. They

might be said to be so when they were inspected, and they were wise in so submitting, for it was a measure without which they could not be effectually improved; but when they were so assembled they were under the command of a general officer of the line.

General *Tarleton* said, that the opinion he had upon that subject he should carry with him out of the House to-night; but if what he had suggested could be of any service to the country, he should be glad of it. When he came to speak upon this subject hereafter, he should have an opportunity of praising or of commenting upon this system, as it should appear to him to be right.

Mr. *Pitt* observed upon one of the clauses, it was there proposed to put volunteers under the command of general officers when they were called out, which they would be in considerable numbers in the various districts of this country, for he knew of nothing so likely to improve them materially in their military exercise. Now, considering the different districts in which they were dispersed, as many of them should be, and he hoped they would be, put on permanent duty as much as possible, they should, therefore, be under the command of an officer of the line. The general rule was, that they were to be put under the command only of a general officer; now, considering the variety of cases in which they might be out, and the different districts all at once, it might be impossible to provide for each of them a general officer to be their commander; in which case it might be extremely convenient to put them under the very respectable command of inspecting officers, who were below the rank of general officers, and, therefore, he should move that the words of the clause should run thus, "such general or other field officer."

Mr. Secretary *Yorke* said, it was perfectly clear that lieutenant-generals were general officers according to military definition; and this was a point which depended wholly on his Majesty, for he might at his pleasure commission his adjutants general officers, for his Majesty might, beyond all doubt, create the office of adjutant general; there was such an officer now in France. No doubt his Majesty might give such a rank, and to as many adjutants as his Majesty might think proper, and then they would all take the rank of adj. general, and be to all intents and purposes general officers, and that this was within the general prerogative of the crown, was a matter not

to be doubted. Viewing this point as he did, he was persuaded that the words now proposed, "or other field officers," should not be inserted in this clause, for then a lieutenant-col. might be placed under an inferior field officer. He was, however, perfectly aware that the volunteers should have the benefit of the assistance of officers who were not general officers.—With respect to the inspecting field officers who have not the rank of lieutenant-col., the assistance from them would be as assistance from the adj. general, which would be that of giving advice and opinion; but if advisable to give adjutants command, many of them, to his knowledge, were officers of excellent qualifications, and his Majesty might give them rank; but he was afraid that if words of this kind were inserted, considerable difficulties would arise on account of the point of rank, because many officers might thus be put under the command of those who were inferior to them in rank, which might create unpleasant feelings in the service. He expressed a wish that this matter might take the course pointed out for it, as he conceived, in the system of the militia.

Lord *Castlereagh* seemed at first rather inclined to think the words proposed were necessary, but on hearing his right hon. friend (Mr. *Yorke*) again, his lordship declared himself satisfied that the words were unnecessary.

Mr. *Pitt* agreed that there was no difficulty whatever when the volunteers were called out for actual service; that was removed by what was said by the Secretary of State, but what he wanted to apply his amendment to was, that of the volunteers being called out, not for actual service, but permanent duty for awhile, in order to improve them in their military exercise. The question was, whether there were sufficient numbers of general officers to command all the volunteers who might assemble and remain on permanent duty, in all the dispersed districts of the country? Now, he thought there would be a great difficulty to find general officers of this sort for them all; and, therefore, the words were necessary for the purpose of admitting other field officers as well as general officers to such commands: and it did not appear to him that there would be any inconvenience in placing them under either the command of a general or other field officer, ranking above the command of the corps; this would not create any difficulty. And this species of military superintendence

was very material during the time that the volunteers were out, for the purpose of military improvement.

Mr. *C. Wynne* was anxious, that military officers of experience should be appointed to direct the operations of the volunteers; the necessity of attending to this must be obvious, for whatever knowledge the gent. who had command in the militia might have of military business (and he believed that most commanders of that body were well acquainted with that subject), he could very safely say, that the volunteer officers were extremely deficient. For himself he would confess, that although a col. in the volunteers, he knew nothing at all of military matters, and he had no doubt that there were many gents. in the House whose candour would urge them to make the same confession, and with equal truth.

Lord *William Russell* expressed his wish that the conditions upon which the volunteers had originally engaged their services, should not in the smallest instance be violated.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* proposed to postpone the further consideration of this amendment until the report should be brought up, in order that inquiries should be made, how far the adoption of it would be consistent with strict military principle. This he thought the more necessary, as he understood that a doubt existed among some militia colonels whether they should, in any case, be placed under the command of any military officer below the rank of a general; and the adoption of this amendment, he apprehended, would tend to confirm that doubt, which ought the more to be guarded against, as it was desirable to apply the same principle to the militia and the volunteers. — The amendment was accordingly postponed.

On the clause to enable commanding officers of volunteer corps to discharge volunteers for non-attendance, &c.,

Mr. *Rose* proposed to leave out these words, "and each volunteer officer shall report the name of the person so discharged to the deputy lieutenants of the district, and to the parish assessor, in order that he may be liable to the ballot, &c." The right hon. member stated his reason for this motion to be, that the case was expressly provided for in another part of the bill, and of course, in this instance, superfluous.

Mr. *Lascelles* wished that the causes to justify a volunteer's discharge from his corps should be more specifically and accurately described, or otherwise the com-

manding officer might do wrong, and render himself liable to an action at law.

Mr. *Tierney* could not hear of a private's bringing an action against his commanding officer, or taking any step to compel him to state his reasons for any proceeding he might think it necessary to take for the good order and discipline of his corps.

Mr. *Pitt* hoped that it was not likely any officer, who had the honour of commanding a volunteer corps would abuse his power. If any volunteer should be refractory, he would rather recommend an endeavour to reclaim him than instantaneous expulsion; but that however painful, it must, if necessary, be of course resorted to. Of the clause before the committee, he altogether disapproved, as unnecessary, because he conceived that without it the commanding officer of a volunteer corps had the power of discharging any volunteer he thought proper.

Mr. Secretary *Yorke* defended the policy of the clause, and in proof of its necessity mentioned, that he understood that several corps had, on their first formation, entered into resolutions, that no member should be dismissed without the consent of the majority of the corps. They therefore held an opinion, that it was highly advisable that the authoritative voice of Parliament should be sent forth to do away such doubts as might exist respecting the power of volunteer commanders to discharge any volunteer who should misbehave.

Mr. *Fox* said, that the nature of the misbehaviour which would justify the discharge of a volunteer, ought, as well for the satisfaction of the commander, as for the regulation of the men, to be very clearly described.

Mr. *Pitt* conceived that the power of the commanding officers ought, in this case, to be quite discretionary and unlimited.

Mr. Secretary *Yorke* could not agree to the idea that commanders should be allowed to discharge men at their own option without any adequate cause; such a privilege was not allowed the commander of the regular army or the militia, and the principle would be mischievous to admit, particularly, in case the volunteers should be called into actual service, and a capricious volunteer commander might in such a case deprive the country of many effective men, and even in peace it might give room to great injustice, as it would afford the opportunity of rendering volunteers who had gone through all the routine of discipline liable to be dismissed at the will of an officer, and possibly with a view to deprive them of their exemptions.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* did

not approve of the total abrogation of the clause, neither did he of the opinion that the causes of a volunteer's discharge were fully stated. He thought that the inefficiency of a man was a good ground for discharging him, as well as his misbehaviour.

Mr. Fox considered that any limit without a remedy was but idle words; for it was not mentioned how if the limit were transgressed, the discharged volunteer was to obtain redress against his officer, and certainly a dismissal under the present circumstances might be a great grievance to a volunteer.

Mr. Pitt, of all modes of redress, disapproved of that alluded to in the course of the debate, namely, an appeal to a court of law. It would be ridiculous to think of a court of law engaged in investigating the causes which should justify the dismissal of a man from a military corps, and the expense would be too much to encounter. He would rather have such appeals from discharged volunteers to be decided upon in a summary way by the deputy lieutenants of the county.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* thought, that no mistake could take place in regard to the expressions. The misbehaviour or improper conduct expressed in the clause must relate to their behaviour as members of the corps. There might be a court of inquiry to which any appeal might be made, and upon the report of which a determination might be formed.

Mr. Raine was of opinion that the reasons of dismissal ought to be specifically stated in every instance, in order that the aggrieved might be able to apply for redress.

Mr. Fox observed that misbehaviour was by no means comprehensive enough to be assigned as a general reason. Insufficiency, incapability to do the duty, from whatever cause it proceeded, might be a very sufficient reason, and carried along with it this advantage, if specified, to the person dismissed, that it would be a protection to him against the militia and army of reserve.

The question being put, on the motion of Mr. Addington, that after the word "misbehaviour" in the original clause, the words "or other sufficient reasons" should be inserted, a long and desultory conversation took place, in which Mr. Fox, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Bragge, Mr. Rose, Mr. Geary, General Tarleton, Mr. Sec. Yorke and others were successively engaged.

Mr. Secretary Yorke concluded from what he had heard, that it would not be agreeable to give the commanding officer of a volunteer corps an unlimited power. But a court of inquiry he thought, to which

appeals might be made, would be attended with advantages. He rather wished the clause to stand as it was, with the amendment only proposed by his right hon. friend (the *Chancellor of the Exchequer*), in order that it might be farther considered between this and the report.

Mr. Fox wished to know what the words proposed as an amendment meant, or who was to judge of the sufficiency or insufficiency of the reasons that might be assigned. If you wish to give the commanding officer, said the hon. gent., an unlimited power, say so at once. Let us have no more disputes with the volunteers. Let us be no longer under the necessity of consulting the opinions of the *Attorney General* in order to ascertain what line of conduct we shall adopt with the volunteers. If you wish them to be under the control of their commanding officers, and to be dismissed at their discretion, why are you afraid to tell them so; or if the contrary is your wish, why not define in intelligible terms, the powers you wish to repose in their commanding officers?

The *Attorney General* thought, that too much had been already conceded. The measure which the clause proposed, instead of being a fraud, as the hon. gent. opposite (Mr. Fox) had alleged, was an instance of the good faith which government was anxious to keep with the volunteers. The commanding officer, it was true, was not required to state his precise grounds; but at the same time he could not discharge any man without assigning some grounds which might be afterwards a subject of complaint if the person discharged found himself aggrieved. He thought the clause with the amendment ought to stand as at present, as the persons who might think themselves aggrieved had the power to complain.

Mr. Fox thought that such a system would lead to perpetual litigation, as actions might be brought in such cases for pecuniary losses.

Lord W. Russell was in favour of the commanding officer being obliged to assign the specific reasons that might lead him to dismiss any man.

Dr. Laurence thought that the clause with the amendment proceeded upon a principle that was not military, and inveighed at considerable length against that mixed and indeterminate system which seemed to be too much countenanced by the spirit of the bill. He wished ministers to go to the extent either of the one system or the other.

Mr. Pitt, upon the question being again put, moved that the whole clause be rejected but the first two lines.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* deprecated the idea of dividing the House on a question of this nature. He hoped the right hon. gent. (Mr. Pitt) would not insist on a division, as the question was of so delicate, and, in some respects, intricate a nature. For his own part, he was not ashamed, after all that had been said by the learned gent. (Dr. Laurence), to express his doubts on a question which he had never viewed so nearly as to be able to judge of its effects. He thought it, therefore, the duty of the House not to come to any discussion at present, but to avail themselves of the interval between this and the report, to consider the subject more maturely. He would ask his right hon. friend (Mr. Pitt) if it was consistent with his principles to debar gentlemen from considering the subject, and to hurry on an immediate decision without regard to the many consequences it might occasion; to decide rashly a question on which the volunteer interests, the very fate indeed, of the volunteer corps, might ultimately depend. He was thoroughly convinced that it was not the will of the volunteer corps that a discretionary power of an unlimited extent should reside in their commanding officers. He wished to have leisure to deliberate before a step that might be attended with such disastrous consequences. Should a division be insisted on, which he hoped would not, he should be able to-morrow to look back with satisfaction on the vote which he was determined to give, that the clause should stand as it is at present with the amendment already moved. At the same time, he by no means pledged himself to the House that he would adhere to the opinion he had now stated, should he acquire any new information on the subject. The committee have already recognised the principle on which the clause is founded, he thought it necessary therefore, not to precipitate a subject of so much importance, and on which there was room for so much doubt, while the general principle was acknowledged by all.

Lord G. Cavendish thought the clause ought not to be retained, as it neither was satisfactory to the House, nor appeared to correspond with the opinion of ministers themselves.

Mr. Fox animadverted on the mode of reasoning pursued by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. They were all of one opinion, indeed, in regard to the principle, but that opinion seemed to be that the clause in question meant nothing. They were all of opinion that an unlimited power should not be vested in the commanders of the volunteer corps: but the question was, how to apply

to practice a principle which they all acknowledged. The right hon. gent required more time to make up his mind. If the framers of the bill then required more time to come to a determination, there was no wonder that the House should be in want of time for the same purpose, and yet the right hon. gent. would not allow them that indulgence which he claimed exclusively to himself, by forcing down this clause, when according to his own confession, it absolutely meant nothing. Both he and the right hon. gent. wished to wait till they were more able to determine, but they wished to wait in different ways. He, for his own part, wished to wait by doing nothing. But the right hon. gent. wished not to be idle in the mean-time, though his activity amounted to nothing. He would advise those gentlemen, on the contrary, if they could not amend the clause in question, to say nothing, but to wait till they could say something to the purpose. It had been said, that it would be degrading to a commanding officer to be obliged to assign his reasons for his conduct on every occasion: but he would be glad to know from what quarter such sentiments were derived? He was certain the laws of this country did not say so. They required, on the contrary, that every man, in whatever situation, should be able to justify his conduct on principles of truth and honesty. The words of the clause, in fact, meant nothing: but allow them, say the framers of the bill, to remain unmeaning, as we acknowledge them to be, till we can find words that have some meaning, which, in all probability, we shall find between this and the report.

After some observations from Mr. Bragge, General Maitland, and some others, the question of amendment was again put; and a division being called for, the gallery was cleared about ten o'clock.

For the Amendment, — 101

Against it — — — 87

Majority — — — 14

On the clause relative to the right of volunteers to resign,

Mr. Pitt observed, that there ought to be some time allowed for the notice of resignation, in order to prevent persons from withdrawing in consequence of momentary disgust; and 2dly, to afford the means to commanding officers of obtaining some other person to fill up the vacancy.—After a few words from Mr. Sec. Yorke and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, it was agreed that 14 days notice should be given after the first of April, the power of resignation in the mean time to remain uncontrolled.

Sir Robert Lawley observed upon the hardship which would result to a servant, who being inrolled in a volunteer corps, quitted his master's service, and went into another part of the country, and inrolled himself in another corps, whilst in the mean time, he might probably be called upon to serve (having been previously balloted) in the militia or army of reserve. He thought that if a person inrolled himself in another volunteer corps, within one month after withdrawing from the former, he should be exempted from the effects of the ballot.

Mr. Secretary Yorke said, it was his intention to propose a clause relative to this object.

Mr. Pitt thought it but fair, if individuals were trained 24 days, and afterwards resigned, that they should not be liable to actual service in the militia or army of reserve, unless when the corps in which they previously belonged were called out into the field.

Mr. Secretary Yorke explained, that the liability to serve referred in the first instance only to the filling up of vacancies. In cases where for non-payment of subscriptions or fines resignation is refused, an appeal, as the bill formerly stood, was to be given to the lords lieutenants and deputy lieutenants of different counties.

Sir W. W. Wynne saw great inconveniences arising from this clause, if it were not materially altered. It would, in many cases, be necessary for officers of volunteer corps to go forty or fifty miles to attend an appeal, which would be a very great inconvenience. He proposed therefore to extend the right of appeal to magistrates and justices of the peace in the several divisions, sub-divisions, and places where the particular volunteer corps were situated.—The amendment was adopted accordingly.

The clause regulating the allowances to be given to volunteers when on actual service, occasioned a long discussion.

Mr. Secretary Yorke stated his intention to introduce a clause, the effect of which would be, to deduct one guinea from the two guineas to be allowed, from the allowance to corps which have already received an allowance of one guinea, on being called out into actual service.

Mr. Pitt objected to this arrangement. He understood that 24,000 men had been already on permanent duty, and he thought 24,000 guineas a trifling consideration when compared with the benefits to be derived from these corps again assembling for the same purpose. These corps which had assembled on permanent duty, were, he believed, chiefly situate in those parts of the country which were most open and ex-

posed; therefore, he thought they ought to be encouraged by bounties to assemble again on permanent duty, in order to render them still more perfect in discipline. They had also assembled at a time of the year when they had not half the means of attaining that perfection of discipline which they might have had at another period. With this view of the subject he thought that no scruple ought to be entertained about expending 2 or 300,000 guineas for the attainment of so important an object as that increase of discipline in the volunteer corps, which would be attained by their assembling on permanent duty. No narrow economy ought to stand in the way of such an object so material to the defence of the country.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, that the corps which had already assembled on permanent duty, had not been called out for the purpose of learning discipline, but to perform garrison duty; he therefore agreed that if they assembled again on permanent duty, they ought to receive a similar bounty.

General Maitland thought that the bounty ought to be regulated by the number of days of actual service. If the volunteers received such large bounties for service, there was danger that jealousy might be created among the regular troops. He suggested the propriety of allowing only 8s. 6d. for seven days service, 10s. 6d. for 14 days, and a guinea where it extended to the whole 21 days. By such an arrangement he was convinced that the inconveniences alluded to would be avoided. Unless this was done, it had the appearance of giving the volunteers double pay to allow them such large bounties.

Mr. Pitt could not at all admit this inference. When men first entered into the army, they might receive a bounty of 15 or 20 guineas. They thus had the means of living more comfortably the first year of their service than in any one subsequent. But it could not be seriously urged that they were for the first year allowed double pay. He disapproved of the proposition of placing the money allowed in the hands of the commanding officer, to be expended in necessities. He thought it much preferable to let it be given in the form of a direct bounty. It was proper that the individuals called out should, by receiving the money in this way, be enabled to dispose of it either in procuring more comfortable living, or in saving it for the use of their families. This was the mode of giving the allowance by far the most calculated to encourage officers of actual service.

Sir *W. Pulteney* was an enemy to any money being given for the pay of volunteers. It was not by money, but by the principles and spirit of the people, that voluntary service could be obtained. We must, to be enabled to defend the country, have immense numbers of men in arms, and these numbers we had not money to procure. There were many other ways of disposing of our money without paying the volunteers, and with all the economy that could be used, the House might depend on it the public purse would be pretty well drained.

Mr. *Pitt* allowed, that from the habits of his life he could not be supposed so well qualified to judge of the application of money as the hon. baronet; but he must be permitted to say, that the saving now proposed, was one, which neither wisdom or policy could suggest. He entertained no idea that there was any want of spirit in the volunteers of this country; but this spirit alone, without proper encouragement, could not produce voluntary service adequate to the extent of the danger which threatened us. Many individuals might be very willing to enter on actual service, who could not do so without material inconvenience to themselves and families. To remove this inconvenience was the object to be effected by the country, and the expense of money was no object compared with the advantage obtained.—He knew the accuracy of the hon. baronet's mind, and was fully aware of his great weight, but could not help regretting his anxiety on the present occasion to prevent the saving of the expense to be incurred in paying the volunteers on actual service. The hon. baronet's opposition now was distinguished by as great obstinacy as his pertinacious resistance last year to any allowance for drilling the volunteers. He trusted that the committee would not listen to any proposition for curtailing the allowances to volunteers on actual duty.

Sir *W. Pulteney* claimed at least the merit of consistency. The right hon. gent. had chosen to allude somewhat personally to his attachment to money. If the right hon. gent. attacked him on that score, he could retort on him on another, and recal to the recollection of the House the extravagant, expensive, and unnecessary schemes of the right hon. gentleman's administration, and the enormous burdens to which that extravagance had subjected the country. The hon. baronet recapitulated his former observations as to the inexpediency of paying the volunteers.

Mr. *Windham* made several observations upon the point in question.—Much had

been said of the little importance of expense in such a case, but he did not entirely subscribe to such a doctrine. One great question to be considered was, whether the objects proposed could not be got cheaper? Safety was a great and imposing sound; it was a thing of the last importance, but the committee should recollect that the present discussion referred only to a chance of safety, and that but a very bad one too; it was also fair to consider whether the chance of safety they were about to purchase was worth the money to be given for it. There were other objects upon which the money in question might be laid out, and with far greater advantage; the expense of these things was the grand consideration; it was the very sinews of war: let them consider that after all they were always stopped by considerations of expense; things went on smoothly and well until the expense induced hesitation. There were a number of ways in which the sum of money under consideration might be better applied—to the amelioration of the regular army for instance; that most effective species of our force might be in many ways advantaged by money, and in an incalculably greater proportion than the advantages attainable in the present object. It was by no means thought in the country, that the monies under consideration were to be applied to the purposes now stated. In the county of Norfolk the general understanding was, that the money was to be given for necessities, and not as had been held, in the shape of a bounty, and a bounty renewable as often as the force should be called out.

After a few observations from Mr. R. Ryder, the provision of "that a sum, not exceeding one Guinea, shall be paid by the receivers-general, &c." was agreed to by the committee. A few of the subsequent clauses and provisions of the bill were then agreed to, without observation or amendment.—On the suggestion of Mr. Secretary Yorke the committee agreed to report progress, the chairman was directed accordingly, and the House resuming, the committee was directed to proceed again on Thursday. The remaining orders were then disposed of, and at twelve o'clock the House adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, March 7.

[*MINUTES.*—Counsel were finally heard relative to the Irish Appeal, *Stewart v. Young*. After which their lordships affirmed the decree of the Irish court.—The bills before the House were forwarded in their respective stages: among which the

Duke of York's Estate Bill was read a third time and passed, and the Marine Mutiny Bill, and the Scotch Bankrupt Law Bill were read a second time.

[**MUTINY BILL.**—On the question for the third reading of the Mutiny Bill,

The Duke of *Norfolk* rose, and made some observations relative to certain provisions which had been introduced into the bill, the effect of which, and more especially their introduction into a bill such as that under consideration, he highly disapproved. The provisions to which he alluded, went to authorise the collection of tolls upon the passage of army waggons, &c. over certain bridges. Having stated his grounds of objection to such a regulation, in some detail, the noble duke observed that the principle upon which it proceeded was a novel one, with reference to bills of a similar description of that before their lordships. His interference was guided by no other motive than a view to the public service. Mutiny bills may be said to be regular annual bills since the establishment of a standing army, and were necessarily so, as long as that establishment continued. He did not then move to expunge the provision in question, but he trusted what he had thrown out would have its weight with the framers of such bills, and induce them to amend the act accordingly.—Some private business was then disposed of, and the House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, March 7.

[**MINUTES.**—A message from the Lords announced their consent to the Portugal Corn Indemnity Bill, the London Dock Bill, the Duke of York's Estate Bill, the Irish Bank Restriction Bill, and others.—Doctor Duigenan moved the order of the day for the commitment of the Bill for Regulating the Age at which Holy Orders should be allowed to be taken in Ireland. The Bill was accordingly committed, and ordered to be reported to-morrow.—Sir E. Hartopp brought in a Bill to enable the Peace-Officers of Leicester, at the Quarter Sessions, to make a fair rate of taxes for that county. Read the first time.—Mr. Vansittart brought up a bill for permitting the importation of hides, tallow, and wool, in foreign ships, on payment of the like duties as if imported in British or Irish ships. Read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.—Mr. Alexander brought up the Report of the Irish Revenue Acts Bill.—Sir William Young, Chairman of the Committee on the Ilchester

Election, brought up the report of the determination of the committee, which was, that it was the opinion of the committee, that, of the sitting members, Charles Brooke, Esq. was duly elected; but that Sir Wm. Manners was not duly elected; that neither John Manners, Esq. nor Wm. Webb, Esq. were duly elected members for the borough of Ilchester, but that neither of the petitions of these two gentlemen appeared frivolous or vexatious.—Sir W. Young then gave in a special report from the said committee, stating, that in the opinion of the committee, Sir Wm. Manners had, at the last election for Ilchester, by himself, or his agents, been guilty of bribery and corruption, so as to incapacitate him from sitting for the borough of Ilchester upon such election, and also that Wm. Webb had been guilty of bribery and corruption. This report was ordered to lie on the table.—On the motion for Sir Wm. Young, the speaker was ordered to send his warrant to the clerk of the crown, to issue a writ for the election of a burgess to serve in Parliament for the borough of Ilchester, in the room of Sir Wm. Manners, whose seat had been declared vacant.

[**MILITARY OFFICERS' INCOME TAX.**—Lord Temple, according to notice formerly given, moved, "That there be laid before this House, an account of all sums of money assessed under the authority of the commissioners appointed to collect the duty proceeding from the military incomes of all officers on the half-pay, on the staff, or belonging to his Majesty's army, in any regiment of cavalry, artillery, infantry, royal marines, royal garrison battalions, or corps of engineers, or of the militia, from the 5th of April to the 5th of October, 1803, inclusive, so far as the said assessments refer to or concern the subaltern officers on half pay, or in any of the said corps or regiments." He only wanted an answer to this motion from the chancellor of the exchequer, as he was not quite prepared to bring it forward on a former occasion.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that he should have been very sorry to have deprived the House, or the noble lord, of any information on the subject, were it not that he knew that the noble lord's object was to relieve the subaltern officers from the tax. To this he felt that it was impossible to accede, and on this ground he must oppose the motion.

Lord Temple said, that the chancellor of the exchequer had correctly understood the grounds upon which he moved for this account, for it was certainly with a view to found a motion upon it, for relieving the

subaltern officers from the effects of the tax. He only wished the question to be put at present, without entering any farther into it.—The question was then put, and negatived without a division.—His lordship then gave notice, that on this day fortnight he would bring forward a Motion, for the House to resolve itself into a Committee, to consider the property tax, as far as it related to the proportions to be imposed upon subaltern officers.

[*IRISH INSURRECTION.*].—Sir John Wrottesley.—I rise, Sir, in pursuance of the notice I gave upon a former night, to call your attention to a subject by no means new to the House. It has frequently been discussed incidentally, and in all these discussions there has hitherto appeared to be a material difference of opinion, amongst his Majesty's ministers, as to where the blame was imputable. It will not, then, be deemed surprising if his Majesty's ministers, with all the means of information they possess, have not been able to form a decided and unanimous opinion, that there should exist also doubts in this House, and if these doubts do exist, that an individual like myself, should wish to bring forward this inquiry in a shape which, in the first instance, will admit a wide field of discussion, and, if it meets the approbation of the House, will afford an opportunity of procuring every species of information that can tend to elucidate a transaction of such importance to the honor of the Irish government, and the safety and happiness of the Irish people.—I shall not inquire what has induced the hon. Admiral (Berkeley) to wave his motion, but I totally disclaim the intention with which he, from the most honourable motives of friendship, had been induced to bring it forward. I feel myself called upon to consider the subject on a more enlarged scale, and without wishing to throw a larger share of blame upon one part of the government, to exculpate another, that the subject should undergo a full, fair, and candid investigation. Upon any motion of inquiry relative to Ireland, it was formerly objected, that the Parliament of that country were competent to the management of their own affairs. Such an objection is since the Union, not only impossible, but appears to afford an opportunity of impressing the necessity of a strict attention to their welfare. It cannot be doubted that great sacrifices were made by the members of Ireland, and I hope no member of the British Parliament opposed that measure, without first reflecting on the important duty he took upon himself, and without a determination to feel an equal

regard for the interests of that country upon all occasions. Those interests were formerly the exclusive care of the Irish Legislature; their discussions were free from the weighty and important considerations of foreign policy, and their whole attention was directed to the improvement of the internal state of the country, and to keep a jealous and watchful eye over the government in whose hands their lives and property were placed. All these considerations are now blended with the great duties of a general attention to the interests of the empire at large, and I earnestly hope they will equally become subjects of serious and important concern to every gentleman who hears me, and that we shall prove we agreed to the measure of Union, not for the purpose of depriving Ireland of any benefit, but of lending our assistance, and all the abilities possessed by this House, in endeavouring to raise her to an equal share of prosperity with this part of the empire, and to conciliate the minds of the lower orders in that country, that instead of being objects of jealousy to the Government, they may, like the people of this country, become a formidable increase to that national force, which we may be called upon to exert against the common enemy.—Another objection is of more recent date. A motion in some respects similar to that which I shall submit, was opposed upon two grounds, the first, that any motion "not proposed to be followed up by any practical measure, with a view to some beneficial effect, must at all times be liable to great objections."—In the present case, it is my intention to move for a Committee of the whole House, to inquire into the conduct of the government of Ireland relative to the insurrection of the 23rd July, and the previous conduct of that government, as far as it relates to the said insurrections; and I have no hesitation in saying, that a beneficial effect *must* result from this enquiry. If, on the one hand, it should appear that the government of Ireland were active and vigilant, that they had taken every means of procuring correct information, that they had had the ability to discriminate what was true, and what was exaggerated; if the Lord Lieutenant should appear to have been at his post, prepared, in concert with the Commander of the Forces, to give the necessary orders, anxiously watching over the lives of his Majesty's subjects entrusted to his care, and placed under his immediate protection—is any man prepared to say, that a beneficial effect will not be derived by removing doubts which are entertained, and very generally too, of the conduct of the Irish Government? Will no beneficial effect

be produced by increasing the confidence of the people of that country in this House? Yes, Sir, the Irish are a generous and grateful people, the constitution of their country, which has undergone a material change, teaches them now to look up to *us* for protection, justice, and a redress of grievances. Let them not apply in vain. Let us not consider them as empty words, but consider their substance, and their consequences, and let the Irish nation never have reason to assert, that their interests are neglected, or that justice is denied them by this House.—If, on the other hand, it should appear, that government disregarded all the information given them, despised all advice, had been so ignorant of the real state of the country, as to be incapable of discrimination; that during their administration no system of police was arranged, with which they kept up a constant communication—if it should appear, that though frequently warned, they were not aware of the extent of the preparations, or inclined to give credit to them—will any man deny, that a beneficial effect will be produced by an immediate application to the throne, to dismiss those under whose very eye an insurrection has been matured, by whose negligence a great and illustrious character has been dragged from the arms of his daughter, and murdered in her presence, who, if proper precautions had been taken, might still have been contributing to the happiness of his family, and the advantage of his country?—The other ground of opposition upon that occasion was the early period at which the inquiry was called for. But when it is recollected, that in the year 1798, when the rebellion was over, and individuals brought to justice, the Irish government came to Parliament, with all the information they possessed, it will not be deemed objectionable at this hour, when we are under precisely the same circumstances. I am at a loss, then, to judge what objection can be made to a motion, which I shall submit, from no motives of personality to any individual concerned, for with none am I acquainted, but solely in the spirit of fair inquiry and investigation.—I shall endeavour, as briefly as possible, to state the particulars of this transaction. As early as the December preceding, Mr. Emmett returned from the continent, and joined a conspiracy already formed. This time of its duration, about 8 months, is farther corroborated by the proclamation found in the *dépôt* of the rebels, and which they intended to have published, had they been successful. Nothing very material transpires till his Majesty's message of the 8th of March was

known. That which spread such general gloom over the minds of every gentleman in this House, seems to have given fresh vigor to these conspirators. In the same month, in the metropolis of Ireland, under the immediate eye of government, several *dépôts* were established and particularly one in Patrick-street, and one near Dirty-lane. The forging pikes, making pike handles, collecting blunderbusses and pistols, making up military cloathing, and other warlike preparations, continued to be made without any interruption from the Government, till the 16th of July, when the *dépôt* in Patrick-street exploded. A peace-officer visited this *dépôt* the day the explosion took place, and found pikes, pike-handles, and preparations for making gunpowder. What the government did in consequence of a circumstance of such evident notoriety, will be for them to explain, should the House think fit to grant this inquiry; but, so alarmed was Mr. Emmett, that he immediately changed his residence, and appears during the following week, to have made every exertion to accelerate his preparations till the hour of 9 on Saturday night the 23d of July, when he is stated upon his trial, to have sallied forth avowedly for the purpose of attacking the castle of Dublin. Men, from all parts of the country, had been observed resorting to Dublin, and a large body were actually armed near the *dépôt* in Dirty-lane, before they were at all perceived by the peace officers; nor had government any intimation of this *dépôt*, which contained 8,000 pikes, and above 34,000 ball cartridges, besides other military stores.—As a recital of all the barbarous proceedings of these rebels is unnecessary to my argument, I will proceed to examine the conduct of government. That they did not make *any* preparations, I do not assert, but shall state to the House all I know they did, and leave gentlemen, until it shall be finally ascertained by an inquiry, to draw their own inference as to their sufficiency.—That government were repeatedly warned of their danger, by persons of great credit and respectability, there is no doubt, and I believe that in many instances, that information was most ungraciously received.—At 3 o'clock the commander in chief is stated to have been informed of it, and the lord lieutenant proceeded soon after to the Phoenix Lodge to prevent giving any alarm. I mention this to prove, that the *not creating alarm* was the determination of this meeting at 3 o'clock. I have reason to think that some precautions were recommended relative to the bank and the ordnance stores, and a meeting of the principal officers of the gar-

ri son was also determined upon; but still, in order to avoid giving *alarm*, it is expressly stated, that this meeting should not take place till after dark, nor were the guards to be re-inforced till the same period. That no information was given to the mayor, is not denied, but it is asserted, that information was given to Mr. Alderman Alexander, the superintending magistrate.—Now, Sir, I am credibly informed, that Mr. Alderman Alexander actually slept out of Dublin that very night. In the absence of the lord lieutenant and a right hon. gent. who was attending his duty in Parliament, the first public officer was Mr. Marsden, the under secretary. This gentleman would of course have correspondence with other public officers, during such an important moment. When the accounts continued to increase, it was his opinion, or rather (to use his own words) it would be "*handsomely done*" to reinforce the guards at the Phoenix Lodge. This the lord lieutenant, in the postscript to a letter which has appeared in the public prints acknowledges, but concludes that the commander in chief has received further intelligence.—Now, Sir, I take this to be an unequivocal proof, that the information given to the commander in chief at 3 o'clock, did not even warrant providing additional security for the person of the first magistrate; and this I will add, that no information was given him, that was not accompanied with doubts, stating that Mr. Marsden could "neither wholly credit nor reject them." Such was the want of accurate information, that two hours before the rebellion broke out, their secretary could neither credit or reject the reports! But there has been, on the part of some persons, an attempt to throw the blame on the military. The House will recollect, that at the period this transaction took place, Ireland, was asserted to be in a state of perfect tranquillity. There were no acts for suspending the *habeas-corpus*, or for proclaiming martial law; consequently, its police devolved upon the civil power.—I trust it will never be asserted, that under such circumstances the military should be resorted to in the first instance. I should, on the contrary, conceive, that they were in no way responsible, unless it should be proved, that upon application from the civil power, they were not prepared. So far, I believe, from this being the case, only one magistrate acted with them, who refused to allow them to fire, alleging himself not to be within the limits of his jurisdiction, and the insurrection was quelled in Thomas-street by a military force, without the assistance of a magistrate, the officer acting in his own defence—nor was he en-

abled to act so effectually in pursuing the rebels, as he might have done, for want of proper assistance from the civil power, but was obliged to fall back on the barracks in James street. But this part of the subject lies within a very narrow compass. If all was done that was agreed upon at 3 o'clock, and subsequently advised by the civil power, always under a positive order to avoid giving any alarm, I shall feel satisfied that the military are exculpated, and the postscript of a letter received by Gen. Fox, just as the rebellion was breaking out, clearly proves that the lord lieutenant conceived he had done *more* than was necessary. The postscript runs thus, "I have just heard that "you have given directions for augmenting "the guard here to an officer and 20 men. "I conclude from it, that you have received "some further intelligence, which induces "you to think it advisable, and as an alarm "is given, that precaution will not add "greatly to it."—I might possibly be considered here, as wishing to exonerate the Commander in chief. I disclaim any such intention, further than that impression which I have received from a careful investigation of the facts. But if there is any cause to blame his conduct, let that also be brought forward. The public have a claim upon this House for the truth of the particulars of that transaction. It is that which I demand, and will pledge myself, if the House thinks fit to acquiesce in this motion, to produce to them a scene of weakness and indecision, far beyond the conception of any one who hears me. I will prove a secretary writing letters unprecedented as to their equivocal meaning. I will prove him just as the rebellion broke out, writing this laconic and extraordinary epistle: "Our accounts grow more serious. "I am told that men are marching on the "line of the canal. Appearances look but "uncomfortable. Yours, &c." This and the unsatisfactory accounts of the reports which he could neither credit or reject, were the intimations given of an insurrection that threatened to subvert the Government of Ireland. I will then move for letters from the lord lieutenant, written after this barbarous and sanguinary rebellion, with an apathy and unconcern, of which nothing but the letters themselves, can give an adequate idea. Nor is there a man in this House, who possesses the warmth of honest feeling, who will not perceive with indignation the very little anxiety which at this awful moment was manifested for the public safety. The precautions taken for the lord lieutenant will, I think, shew the insignificant opinion originally entertained of this rebellion, and form

a history of the minds of government during nine very important hours. At 3 o'clock the lord lieutenant conceived himself sufficiently guarded by a serjeant and 12 men; between 8 and 9 he was *surprised* it should be thought necessary for him to be guarded by an officer and 30 men; and before 11, he sent orders to Sir Charles Asgill by Sir Edward Littlehales, for a further reinforcement of a captain and 50 dragoons, and a field officer and 100 infantry. I do not state this as more than necessary; on the contrary, I think the person of the first magistrate in that country should be held sacred; but I state it, as a criterion of his opinion of the rebellion, and if we proportion the alarm in the minds of government to the number of men, it was just fifteen times greater at 11 o'clock than at 3, when the precautions were originally agreed upon.—Now, in considering all these facts, I have wished to trace some principle upon which the government acted; and the only consistent part they appear to me to have held, was a determination to avoid giving *alarm*. It may, therefore, be necessary to say a few words on the propriety of that determination. It has always been admitted, that it is better to *prevent* than to *punish* crimes. It is impossible the government could have intended to wait till this insurrection took place, with a view of discovering the authors; the risk which every loyal man must have run, the placing the lives of his Majesty's subjects, even for the shortest period, in such a state of danger, would of itself be deemed highly criminal, and the impropriety of such a measure cannot be more fully exemplified than in the unfortunate occurrence which actually took place.—But, it has been argued, that the melancholy circumstance of Lord Kilwarden's death was "accidental," the rising "a contemptible riot." Can that be deemed "contemptible," which had for its object the separation of Ireland, to deprive us of her valuable assistance at a moment when we were called upon to make every exertion for the very defence of these kingdoms? which was evidently undertaken in concert with the enemy, who had probably contributed to the powerful means which they had of carrying their plans into execution. Can that be called a "contemptible riot," which induced you to pass bills, giving the greatest possible power to the government of that country, and after a period of 4 months deliberately to renew them? which obliged you to place the yeomanry of Ireland on permanent duty for 3 months, at an expense of above 400,000l., to be defrayed by the two countries? No! Sir, the government of Ireland found itself

embarrassed. To justify these strong measures, they were obliged to represent it in its true light; they then perceived that if it was important and extensive, they should have been better prepared against it, and what they call in their proclamations "*daring and rebellious outrages in prosecution of a rebellious conspiracy*," dwindles into a "*contemptible riot*."—But let us not differ as to terms. Grant a full and fair investigation. Let us have authenticated papers, and persons at your bar. Let us have the facts, and the appropriate name will easily be found.—I therefore move, "That this house do resolve itself into a committee of the whole house to inquire into the conduct of the Irish government relative to the insurrection of the 23d of July, and the previous conduct of that government, as far as relates to the said insurrection."

Lord Castlereagh.—Sir, if I rightly understand the hon. baronet, he has founded his motion for this inquiry upon the supposed criminal neglect or incapacity of the Irish government in regard to the insurrection of the 23d of July. The hon. bart. began his observations with one which does not possess that accuracy, which, I have no doubt, the hon. bart. intended. He assumed in the beginning of his speech, that it had been conceded that blame attached to some part of the Irish government either civil or military, and that, therefore, this motion was necessary to ascertain to which the blame actually belonged. If any such concession has been made, I should consider that event as being by far too important to justify me in opposing the inquiry. But no such concession was ever made by his Majesty's ministers from the first moment the affair was ever mentioned; the language of ministers was uniformly this, that in their judgment no blame whatever attached to the persons in the government in Ireland, whether civil or military. The facts connected with that transaction, are now sufficiently notorious to enable parliament to judge whether or not an inquiry be necessary.—I shall now shortly examine the grounds upon which I consider this inquiry as necessary or expedient; and if I shall be able to satisfy the house, that there is no ground to attribute blame to any character civil or military, I shall I hope satisfy them, that there is no ground for the present inquiry. I am perfectly aware, that those who are closely connected with the persons who form a part of the government of Ireland, either civil or military, may be anxious for an inquiry. Had the hon. bart. thought proper to bring forward his motion not collectively but specifically, it might have been

entitled to more regard, and attended with more success. Without entering into any minute inquiry, the facts connected with that transaction must undoubtedly be of sufficient notoriety to discuss the question, whether or not there be ground of accusation against any particular person, were the question to be put to issue on that particular point. As far as his Majesty's ministers are concerned, they have uniformly denied that any blame attaches on the part of his Majesty's government in Ireland, and they have always said, that those who are inclined to make that matter a subject of inquiry, may make it a matter of distinct inquiry, and not collective and general, as in the present instance. As to the matter of expediency; if I shall be able to satisfy the house that there is no fair ground to impute blame to any quarter, I shall go thus far, that it is not the duty of ministers to institute any inquiry, merely for the purpose of establishing to the satisfaction of the public, that no blame is imputable to any person whatever. There may be some individuals who have a close connection with the transaction, who may wish that some investigation should take place. I own, that if I myself were in a similar situation, I should wish, for my own justification, that inquiries should be made. Private feelings, however, are totally inconsistent with Parliamentary considerations, or what it is our duty in this place to indulge. Such wishes in individuals constitute, I must own, but an uncertain criterion of the real fact; but surely, to an unprejudiced mind, those feelings must be the strongest, where the most complete innocence exists; where this is the case it is certainly unnecessary to waste the valuable time of parliament in such investigations. My first objection, therefore, to this inquiry is that it is unnecessary, as there is no imputation of blame against any of the persons connected with the Irish government. But there is another material objection in point of time to this inquiry, because the object of it is to attack lord Hardwicke, and it surely is not consistent with justice to institute an inquiry concerning his conduct, while his whole time is taken up in administering the affairs of Ireland. And this objection does not only apply to the lord lieutenant, but to the other persons concerned in the government of Ireland, whether civil or military; because if the inquiry is instituted, the officers who hold chief commands in Ireland must necessarily be examined; all the persons concerned in the civil department must also be examined, and in the mean time the opinion of the people, with

regard to the government would be suspended, the valuable time of parliament would be taken up, the principal civil and military officers must be brought from Ireland to be examined, and all this upon an occasion where no blame can be attached to any person whatsoever. I do not mean to say, that these are arguments that ought to preclude an inquiry, if any satisfactory grounds had been laid for one, but when no satisfactory case has been made out, undoubtedly the inconvenience that must attend it, will have great weight with the house. I profess myself at present, fully prepared to meet the hon. bart. upon his own grounds, and I have no doubt but that I shall be able to convince the house that this inquiry ought not to be gone into. The hon. baronet has stated that the lord lieutenant and the Irish government were totally ignorant of the affairs of that country, that they were supine in the discharge of their duty, that they had not proper information, and that they were incapable of distinguishing the nature of any information given to them, whether it were true or whether it were false. Besides these general charges, the hon. baronet has advanced some specific charges; he has contended that they did not truly appreciate the degree of danger with which they were threatened on the 23d July and that they did not take adequate means to meet it. With respect to the general charges, I beg to say a few words; and first, I beg to deprecate that mode of stating the question which the hon. baronet has adopted. It has been inferred from the general language which ministers have used, with regard to the tranquil state of Ireland, that they conceived that all danger had ceased, and that there was no occasion for any precaution. I contend that every part of their conduct shows that they did adopt every necessary precaution; and even the transactions of the 23d of July, when they came to be fully examined in a court of justice, proved the justice of my assertion. It is true that ministers, speaking of the people of Ireland generally, said, that they were loyal, and that they were tranquil, that the laws could be administered in their usual course, and that, therefore, there were no grounds to justify them for calling for any extraordinary powers. But I would ask any man in this House when ministers held this language, did they mean to convey to Parliament, that such a miracle had been wrought in Ireland, as that a country which had, in a great degree been rendered systematically traitorous, had at once put on a completely new appearance, and that all the

seeds of rebellion were completely eradicated from it. I can venture to say, that no word ever dropped from any individual which could justify such an interpretation. No; it is impossible that such a construction can be put upon anything that passed on any occasion. There were no such drivellers in the government of that country. It is however, but justice to Lord Hardwicke, to state, that he did, before the 23d of July, seriously submit to ministers, upon general grounds, whether, under the contemplation of the treason existing in that country, the suspension of the habeas corpus act ought not to be adopted as a matter of precaution? This consideration the noble Lord did submit to ministers, without particularly pressing it as his own opinion. This is a proof, that his mind was not misled as to the real state of the country. His Majesty's ministers, upon full consideration of this proposition, did not think it expedient to adopt that measure; and I think their decision was a wise one, considering the situation of this country, which was united like one man in defence of their liberties and their independence, and considering the growing loyalty of the people of Ireland; because, under such circumstances, it would have been neither wise nor prudent to have acted upon principles of jealousy towards the people of Ireland. I trust I have now proved this point, that the lord lieutenant of Ireland had neither taken so superficial nor so unwise a view of the state of Ireland, as to suppose that it was a country of complete loyalty, and that no measures of precaution were necessary. The next charge is, that government were not possessed of full information on the subject of the insurrection. Now, I beg leave to contend, that it is not a subject of blame in every case, if government is not in possession of every step and plan which the conspirators might adopt, because in some cases it is actually impossible. During the former rebellion in Ireland, the system of terror was carried to such a pitch, that it was almost impossible to obtain intelligence. In the present, it was equally difficult to obtain intelligence, though from a different reason, for the secret was in so few hands, that there were scarcely any means of obtaining information. The explosion of the powder-mill in Patrick-street, however, determined the conspirators to lose no time in carrying their plot into execution; yet the secret was still confined to very few persons, namely, those who were suffered to go to the depot, and they were not above eight in number. But after the explosion of the powder-mill, go-

vernment did obtain intelligence, for the conspirators wrote from Dublin on the 18th of July, to some persons at Belfast, requesting assistance, and that circumstance was known to the government on the 21st in Dublin. Information was also received from many channels of the intended rising on the 21st, 22d, and 23d of July. Upon the ground therefore, of information, it does appear that the Irish government were not deficient.—I come now to consider whether they had adopted proper measures of precaution, and, in order to decide that question, we must estimate the extent of the danger, to know whether the measures of precaution were sufficient. I shall first examine the extent of the danger as it appeared *a priori*, and then as it appeared in the actual result of the insurrection. The conspirators had not determined to act till after the explosion in Patrick-street, and then, instead of adopting the conduct which was adopted in the former rebellion, of communicating the secret to a great many persons, they only communicated it to a few. I beg the House to consider what was the situation of the government of Ireland; they knew that an application had been made to the people of the north to rise, which application was so coldly received, that the report made to the conspirators was, that the north would not act. It was also known, that almost all the counties in the interior had refused to act, and that the only support upon which the rebels could depend was from the counties of Kildare and Wicklow, and one barony in the formerly rebellious county of Wexford; and it was known that there was not any considerable body of rebels that could move speedily to Dublin. If, under these circumstances, I had been called upon to consider the subject, I certainly could never have entertained the supposition that the rebels of the city of Dublin could have entertained so absurd and mad an idea, as that they could, considering the garrison that was in that city, have entertained any hope of taking the castle. The man who however, did attempt to carry this scheme into execution was a Mr. Emmett, a young man of an enthusiastic mind, who, in consequence of the death of his father, became possessed of about 3,000*l.*, and this sum he thought proper wholly to embark in the project of overturning the government of his country: he did not, as had been done on former occasions, run the risk of detection by applying for subscriptions, but proceeded upon his own capital, and collected a very considerable quantity of pikes, but certainly, not so many as has been stated, for instead

of 8,000 there were not above 3,000; but even if he had collected 8,000 pikes, it never could have entered into his head that he could find 8,000 men in Dublin to use them; which certainly would not have been very easy in such a city as Dublin, and with such a garrison. Indeed, Emmett does not seem to have bestowed much consideration upon the subject. It appeared that he applied to some people in Kildare to join him; they were prudent enough, however, to make some inquiries as to the means he had provided to ensure success: Emmett replied, that he could not communicate with them at that distance, but if they would send two confidential delegates, he would shew them the means he had provided: they did, accordingly, send two delegates, who arrived in Dublin immediately previous to the insurrection, and were taken by him to the dépôt in Thomas-street; but they were so satisfied that the means were insufficient, that they made such a report, that scarcely any of the people from Kildare assisted upon that occasion. Mr. Emmett was, therefore, obliged at last to march from his dépôt at the head of an army of 80 men, and before he reached the market-house in Thomas-street, his army was reduced to 20 men, most of whom were general officers. This, therefore, appears to be the whole of the danger the Irish government had to guard against. But, even if Emmett had 8,000 men for his 8,000 pikes, the garrison of Dublin was able to have driven twice that number out of the town.—I now beg to say a few words as to the nature and extent of the military preparations in Dublin. The garrison consisted of four regiments of infantry, and one of cavalry, amounting together, including artillery, to 4,000 rank and file. This garrison was not placed in one point, but occupied no less than eight different positions, in barracks. The guard that was constantly mounted in Dublin amounted to between 3 and 400 men.—Now, with respect to the precautions that were used, the commander in chief, when he returned from the lord lieutenant, wrote to the officer commanding the artillery and ordnance, to desire him to use all necessary precautions for their security, and the most effectual precautions were accordingly adopted to secure them from any attack. The national bank was the next object, which was defended by an officer's guard; it is, besides, a very strong building, and situated within 200 yards of two of the most considerable military stations in Dublin, the royal barracks, and the barracks at Essex Bridge.—With regard to the castle of Dublin, nobody would

feel more concern than I should, if any of his Majesty's castles were taken possession of by rebels. But even if the rebels had taken it, it would not have facilitated their operations, nor would it have done any other mischief than that of enabling them to destroy a few records; but the castle was always defended by a strong garrison, and besides it was within 100 yards of the barracks at Essex Bridge, in which was the 62d regiment, consisting of between 6 and 700 men. Between 7 and 8 o'clock, the artillery officer reported that all these stations were in a state of perfect security. But the commander in chief did not stop here, he made other arrangements; he augmented some of the guards, and others he ordered to be augmented after it was dark. At half-past 6 o'clock he sent orders to augment the bank and castle guards with 50 men each, but the reinforcements were not to march till after dark. He gave orders for guards also to march to the following places, viz. to the lord lieutenant's, in the park; to the royal hospital, at Kilmainham; and to the guard at Kilmainham, each a serjeant and 12 men; 20 men to Chapelizod, and an officer's guard to Clondalkin, where the powder-mills were. I trust, therefore, that it will appear that the commander in chief had not neglected the necessary precautions for the security of Dublin.—It now remains to be seen how these precautions operated. When the attack broke out, it appeared that two small parties were sufficient completely to disperse the rebels, even before any other parties could march to their assistance. As soon as the insurrection was known, parties marched from the royal barracks, and I now hold in my hand an official report of general Dunn, who commanded the garrison in the barracks that night, by which it appeared that between 10 and 11 o'clock, the following parties marched from the barracks, viz., 100 foot and 50 horse, to the lord lieutenant's, in the park; 50 men at the bank; 3 parties of 100 men each, besides some smaller ones, were sent in different directions; in all 470 foot, and 50 horse were sent from the barracks, and there remained besides 600 rank and file. There is not, therefore, the slightest presumption for imputing any negligence to the commander in chief; in fact the precautions used, when compared with the danger, may almost appear more than was necessary. It is the death of Lord Kilwarden and Col. Brown, that gives a degree of importance to this transaction which does not really belong to it; for when it came to be examined in a court of justice, it appeared to be a most contemptible effort of a

wild and extravagant young man, and had more discouraged the rebels and brought the cause of rebellion into more contempt than any event that had ever occurred; and this was Mr. Emmett's notable receipt for overturning the government of Ireland! I am not, however, surprised that the public mind of that country should be a little disposed to criticise upon the transaction; for though the government was not surprised, yet beyond all doubt the public feeling of the country was surprised at this most extraordinary attempt; as it occurred at a time when it was remarkably dark, and in a country where the people are peculiarly alive to such matters. But there is no transaction examined after it is over, there is no battle criticised after it is fought, in which some error might not be found.—One of the charges against the lord lieut. is, that he had not given written orders to the commander in chief; this is a charge which I am sure the commander himself would not make, because it is a thing not usually practised. It is true, that in one instance, written orders were sent to Gen. Lake, when he commanded in the north of Ireland, but that was under particular circumstances, and could not be necessary where the commander and the lord-lieut. had the means of verbal communication together. It has been urged that patrols ought to have been sent out; but if such extraordinary measures of precaution had been adopted as would have induced the rebels to lay aside their design, the consequence would be, that government would have been the laughing-stock of the country, for they would not have believed that any danger existed. Besides, in that case, how could the government of Ireland, under these circumstances, have applied for any extraordinary power to parliament? They could not have laid such a case before parliament as would have justified ministers in proposing, or parliament in granting, these powers.—Another criticism which has been made upon the conduct of the Irish government was, that they did not call out the yeomanry; but certainly that would have been a most humiliating display of alarm, when the garrison was completely sufficient for the defence of the town.—Another criticism is, that the lord-mayor was not apprised of the danger; but I contend that this was not necessary, as information was sent to the superintending magistrate of the police. At the time of Despard's conspiracy in this country, I have no doubt but that government took the necessary precautions to meet any attempt, but I do not apprehend that they sent to acquaint

the lord-mayor of the circumstance.—With regard to the attack made upon the lord-mayor's house, the fact is, that 4 men went there, and the arms in the house were delivered up by a servant who was in the conspiracy.—Another charge is, that the troops had not ammunition. I believe that the rebels entertained a very different opinion upon the subject; but the fact is, that the commander had given orders that every man, in addition to 60 rounds of ball cartridge in the barracks should always have 12 rounds in his pouch, so that no blame can be attributed to the commander in chief upon that ground. Besides, when it is considered that the troops could not act in a line in Dublin, but must fire by platoons of not more than 6 or 8 abreast, it must be obvious that 12 rounds each man was amply sufficient.—The hon. Bart. has stated that the superintending magistrate slept out of town that night; how the fact really was I do not know, but if he did, that can be no imputation upon government, which had given him the necessary information, and it is perfectly well known, that he gave orders for all the constables and police officers to be in readiness.—I hope the House will excuse me for going so much into detail upon the subject, but I conceived it to be my duty to do so, and I hope the statement I have made will convince the House that the conduct of administration in Ireland, both at the time of the insurrection and since, has been that of a wise, provident, and vigorous government.—I wish to ask, what was the conduct of that government after they knew the extent of the danger? They pursued the treason through all its ramifications, they detected the traitors in every part of the country, they tried criminals by the ordinary tribunals of the country, and displayed clemency whenever it could be done with safety. Upon the whole, therefore, I contend that the Irish government were not ignorant of the general state of the country before the insurrection, that they had information of the intended rising, and consequently were not surprised; that they took the proper precautions to meet the danger that threatened them, and that after the insurrection, they were indefatigable in detecting and bringing the traitors to trial before the ordinary tribunals of the country. In this they judged wisely and acted virtuously, as the laws of the country ought never to be departed from, but in cases of dire necessity. For these reasons, Sir, I contend that no grounds have been laid to induce parliament to grant this inquiry, and therefore it is that I shall vote against the motion.

Mr. Canning.—Before I proceed, Sir, to

state shortly the grounds upon which I am compelled to give my vote in favor of the present motion, I feel desirous of offering a few observations on the ground which my noble friend who has just spoken has taken to oppose the present motion, a ground which might be urged against every motion that ever was made or ever will be made for any inquiry whatever in this house into the conduct of any administration; a course very well calculated to screen any government however liable to perpetual attack, and which to a government not very strong in itself is more especially necessary for that, for many, and some of them particular reasons. It is not, in my opinion, wise to attempt to lay down any general rule to govern all cases of motions for parliamentary inquiry. The grounds in the present case are three: two of them are of a general kind; the reason for or against the inquiry is not to be considered as conclusive on the one side or the other, but considered from both together. Each case of proposed inquiry in this House should be considered, not with reference to any rule that is supposed to be binding, but should be decided upon its own particular merits. It is injudicious to say that inquiries in this House are at all times improper, or at all times to be indulged, but the House will judge in each case as it appears before it, will judge when the topics are brought before it, whether the facts complained of are justly so complained of, and therefore ought to be inquired into, or whether they are assumed facts, and not to be considered; whether, in short, the accusation is justly made, or wantonly made; whether the resistance to it is made with a sense of the integrity of the parties accused, and of the merit of their case, or brought forward to prevent its villainess and rottenness from being searched, and proceeds from an unwillingness to expose it. —My noble friend who now resists the present inquiry has not been sparing in his general topics, but has urged them with a plainness of colouring I hardly ever noticed before. What has my noble friend said against the inquiry now proposed? That it will take up the time, the valuable time of Parliament. Undoubtedly it will do so. But how is the time of Parliament, valuable as it is, to be applied at all—is it not in the exercise of the most important functions of Parliament? And what are these important functions—what but that of looking into the conduct of its government, to see whether the people are well or ill governed; to see whether those who act in the government are deserving of confidence or not? How

can this be known when complaints are most seriously exhibited, and offered to be proved. without an inquiry into the truth or the falsehood of such complaints? How can there be any confidence for the future, unless there is satisfaction as to the past? I must say, that the arguments offered in opposition to the present motion come with a peculiarly ill grace from the mouth of my noble friend,—Sir, I voted for the union between this country and Ireland. I was then an English Member of Parliament; since that union I have sat here as an Irish member, and I will now ask. how it is possible for this House, the great bulk of which consists of English members, to refuse to inquire into a matter so generally interesting to the empire at large, and so particularly interesting to Ireland? Or, am I to be told that I tricked Ireland, when I gave my vote for the union, as a member of Parliament for England?—That the valuable time of Parliament should now be taken up in the discussion of this subject is, in my opinion, highly proper, for had it not been for the union, the subject would have been long ago discussed in Ireland—in that House at the door of which, some of the outrages in question were committed. The very House in which the members would have assembled. had nearly been a scene of action. They would there have most assuredly instituted an inquiry, whether they had or had not been properly defended by the executive government? But if the inquiry now proposed is to be refused on the ground that the valuable time of Parliament is not to be taken up with this matter; if this is to be the specimen of attention—this the sample of diligence—this the scale of vigilance by which the anxiety of Parliament for the welfare of Ireland is to be measured, I must repent of the vote I gave as an English member for the union, and now, as an Irish member, protest against this apathy in the House towards the interests of Ireland. Such must be my feeling, and such my sentiment if this inquiry is to be refused. I must repent of what I did as an English member before the union, and in my present capacity of an Irish member, complain that Ireland has not her fair share of your attention. But not only is this motion supposed to be improper, on account of the valuable time of Parliament which would be taken up by it, but it is improper also, because the valuable attention of my Lord Hardwicke would be taken up by it; and it is asked how the government of Ireland is to go on, if this motion is carried, for then he will be compelled to come over to this coun-

try for his defence? And here, Sir, I must disclaim every thing personal in the present motion: the noble personage supposed to be the most interested in it, I have no knowledge of, otherwise than from the government of which he is the chief magistrate. I have no knowledge of my Lord Hardwicke. I never saw him, nor ever heard of him but as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. I beg leave to say, that I am not to be understood to intend anything personally disrespectful to that noble Lord: I speak of him merely in his official capacity on this occasion; but still, when the question is whether he has governed Ireland well or ill, I must be allowed to speak my mind freely, nor will I take the plea in bar which has been offered to this inquiry by my noble friend, that the noble lord has no time to defend his conduct. What if he be obliged to come away from Ireland? What if he be a valuable chief magistrate? "I hope we have within the land five hundred good as he." I see no absolute necessity for his remaining in Ireland. If he has incurred the suspicion of Parliament, I see no reason why he should not be recalled and brought before this Parliament to make his defence, and another appointed in the office which he now holds. It may be urged, that this course would be indecorous towards the noble lord, but I would ask whether a similar delicacy has been observed in other instances? Has it been observed with regard to General Fox? Has it not been thought necessary to recall General Fox, even although it is admitted now that there was no objection to him? And why, if the lord lieutenant has incurred the suspicion of Parliament, should not he also be recalled? It is now plainly admitted, that there was no objection whatever to the conduct of that gallant officer, and yet he was recalled. I know not by what chain of necessity Lord Hardwicke is so bound to the office of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, that however he may be accused, he cannot come home to defend himself. As to the arguments of my noble friend in bar of inquiry, he seems to have rested them upon three different grounds: 1st, that the government of Ireland had ample information; 2d, that the danger of the day was not so great as it has been represented; and 3dly (a ground which has no relation to the motion), that since the surprise into which government was thrown upon that occasion, government has been vigilant. Now, if I were to admit the truth of this last ground of justification; if I were to admit, in its full force, the assertion, that from the moment of riot, or

whatever it was proper to call it, on the 23d of July, government has been the most vigorous, vigilant, and active that ever existed, yet no part of the accusation upon which this motion is founded would have been answered, for this motion is founded upon an allegation that they did not use proper precautions before and on the 23d of July; the motion has no reference to anything which has happened since that period. Now, it is complained of as a thing improper, that a better prospect has been held forth on the subject of the tranquillity and happiness of Ireland than ought to have been, or than the real state of things would warrant; and upon these topics my noble Friend says that he has stated his opinion with no particular emphasis, but that what he said on that occasion was to be taken with shades and qualifications. Now, Sir, my complaint is that these shades and qualifications, with which subsequent speeches of my noble friend abounded, were never made when the assertion of the tranquillity and happiness of Ireland was made. But when that assertion is complained of as being refuted by facts, then my noble friend turns round and produces his shades and qualifications of what he said. This reminds me of the statement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer last sessions, relative to the state of profound peace, in which that right hon. gent. then represented Ireland. He insisted upon it that when he talked formerly of a peace, he did not mean profound peace: but that the words "profound" and "peace" were so apt to come together. Why they go together, I know not, unless, indeed, that they both begin with a P. Now, I expect that ministers will deal fairly with Parliament; I am of opinion that the words of ministers, especially when they are prospective, should be weighed well before they are delivered, for I do not understand the idea that men are to be called "nature's fools," for having believed the words of a minister; or that it should be thrown in their teeth that "none but fools could believe them." Now, the House is asked why they did not bring with them, when they believed the assertion that Ireland was likely to be tranquil and happy, these shades and qualifications to accompany their belief, so as to be prepared for what has actually happened? But these were not loose or vague assertions; they were the serious assertions of a gentleman well qualified to make them, and for that reason likely to obtain credit for them when made, from the great advantage he is well known to possess by local knowledge, and therefore it is not matter of won-

der that the House of Commons gave that assertion credit.—But my noble friend has said that upon the explosion in Patrick Street government began to think that all was not right. Now, that explosion was on the 16th of July; the insurrection took place on the 23rd. Here is a period of a week during which nothing was done; no precaution was taken by this “wise, vigilant, and provident government,” notwithstanding this abundant reason for precaution. The explosion happened on the 16th, which ought to have put ministers on their guard, nothing, however was done until the 23rd. On the 23d the insurrection takes place, and then, but not till then, government thinks of measures of precaution. Now, I must say, that if ministers did not believe there was danger after the 16th; if they could not see it, there must be an extreme blindness; if seeing it, they did not provide against it, there was an extreme and culpable remissness. My noble friend found this a pinching part of the case, and therefore he took the usual course of very ingenious men upon such occasions; instead of meeting the thing itself, he endeavoured to call the attention of the House off from it, to another, namely the supposed misinterpretation of his opponent, for he has said the number of pikes were not 8,000 as had been erroneously stated, and so considerably exaggerated on the other side, but that they were only between 3 and 4,000. Now, my noble friend ought to be correct upon this subject; because he has the best means of obtaining information; and when he made his statement, and endeavoured to divert the attention of the House to that which was not the truth, or from pursuing that which was the truth, he ought to have taken care that he was accurate in his facts. And here I do not accuse my noble friend of an attempt wilfully to mislead the House; but I must say, he has some way or other failed to obtain correct information; upon the very subject in which he has been correcting the hon. bart. in his statement, he is glaringly incorrect in his own. I hold in my hand a pamphlet, admitted, I believe on all sides, to be pretty good authority, in which the fact upon the subject of the pikes, which my noble friend says, were only between 3 and 4,000, is stated so directly the contrary, and so entirely refutes the statement of the noble Lord, that I shall beg leave to read a passage out of it. This pamphlet states, “that the rebels had on this occasion 36,400 ball-cartridges, scaling ladders, pikes, rebel uniforms, &c. and colours, 8,000 copies of a proclamation of the provisional government, &c.” and

that with regard to pikes,” the mob having been supplied from the depot with arms, &c. there then remained the trifling number of between 6 and 7,000 pikes, &c.” But shall I be allowed to bring forward this assertion against that of his Majesty’s confidential servants? I trust I shall. And that the House may see on what authority this pamphlet rests, I will state who the author of it is. It is not a speculative or vague opinion of an individual who had no source of information on the subject on which he treated but a grave document of perfect authority, no less than the speech of his Majesty’s Attorney General in Ireland, on the trial of Emmett; upon the accuracy of which I apprehend ministers themselves will not affect to entertain a doubt. It has of late become the fashion in this country to run down the Attorney General’s law; but I ask ministers, if they are ready, in like manner, to run down the Attorney General’s facts? My noble friend has stated, that there were only 3 or 4,000 pikes belonging to the rebels discovered. The Attorney General in his speech addressed to the jury, the object of which was to persuade them to shed blood, says, that the number of pikes, after those who had been discovered in arms had been supplied, was between 6 and 7,000! Now my noble friend shall take his choice. Did my noble friend make a wrong apology for the Irish govt. in stating the number of these pikes too low; or was this prisoner, against whom this speech was opened, and who was convicted upon the proof of it, hanged upon a falsehood? Perhaps it may be said, that the speech of the Attorney General was an exaggerated statement of the facts; but I should think that a man in so grave an office on so grave a subject; a man I do not, indeed, know personally, but of whom I have always heard much to his advantage as a professional man, and a man of honour, would not have exaggerated at all, for it was certainly a case, in which he should say nothing but what was strictly correct, because it was a matter in which his fellow creature was to be deprived of his existence. Now, if that learned gent. did speak the truth on that most solemn occasion, my noble Friend has been deceived in the amount of the arms of the rebels, and consequently in the amount also of the danger to which Ireland was exposed on the 23d of July. But there are two ways of stating things in an argument, with both of which my noble friend is perfectly well acquainted, and of which he is always well aware; the one is to state and to prove by facts; the other is to state a general result of assumed facts, and to prove nothing, My

noble friend has taken the latter course, as most suitable to the case on which he was discoursing. He also claimed merit to the government for things in which they had no concern in producing. He told the House that the bank had a strong wall, which I imagine will hardly be considered as a proof of the precaution and the vigilance of government. And as to the castle, although he admitted it would have been disgraceful, it should have been occupied by rebels, he says, that if they had entered it in triumph, they would yet have found nothing in it. I hope ministers do not mean to invert this and say, that if they had entered the bank they would have found nothing there too. But, surely, there is something in impression upon such an occasion as that of which I am now speaking. There is much to be considered in governing a people of high and quick feelings, and strong attachments; and, therefore, if the bank or the castle had fallen into the hands of the rebels, if either the castle or the bank had been surprised, and taken, even if there had been nothing of value in either, it would have had a very bad effect on the feelings of the people of Ireland.—I shall not follow my noble friend in the papers and minutes to which he referred, but all I can say is, that the statement did not strike me as having much in it. I may be wrong, my noble friend may be right, but nobody knows which of us is right; therefore, what? therefore let the house inquire; for that will be infinitely better than to depend upon assertions, unsupported by proof, in the speech of any minister however respectable he may be as an individual. I have shown that my noble friend has suffered himself to be misled by defective information in one striking instance, and his other assertions may proceed from the same defective source. It has been said that the assertions of those who brought forward this subject were exaggerated. It has been said and in one instance already proved, that the statements on the other side are fallacious; therefore let the house no longer rest on exaggerated statements on the one hand, or false construction or defective information on the other, but let the house see the facts as they really are. It is evident from the pamphlet which I have already quoted, and which I shall beg permission to quote again, that the insurrection of the 23d of July was the consequence of a preconceived conspiracy; it was a plan instigated by treason, by persons united together by one common bond of crimes, and insurrection was the consequence of their united efforts. But, whatever might be the degree of danger on the 23d of July, it is rather a cu-

rious defence to say, that precaution has been taken since that day. I shall not delay the house by giving the clerk the trouble of reading the motion, but I believe it referred only to transactions previous to and on the 23d of July. But another curious defence set up by my noble friend is, that it was a very dark night on the 23d of July—a very dark night indeed! Now, if the question had not been, whether government were prepared, but whether their preparations were well executed that night, the darkness of the night or the difficulties of wind and weather, would be an excuse as far as it would go; but although the darkness of the night prevented ministers from seeing, it could not have prevented them from *foreseeing*. I do not see why the darkness of the night could have made ministers blind at least a week previous to that time; and I cannot help observing further, that though the darkness was so great that it was impossible to know what passed that night, yet my noble friend has stated that the number of rebels in the street that night was 80. But how did you count them? How that fact could be ascertained when it was too dark to see anything, is beyond my comprehension! The effect of this darkness was most singular. It made men blind before it happened, and enabled them to see during its continuance. But, in point of fact, I would ask, whether the insurrection was so contemptible as has been stated, and made only by a contemptible mob in Dublin? I apprehend not, for upon the authority of a character high in office, and in the confidence of the Irish government (lord Redesdale), it has been stated that persons had assembled from all parts of Ireland on the occasion, and it has been made the ground of a charge against three-fourths of the population of Ireland, that they had chosen and furnished their quota of these rebels; that is, that three-fourths of the people of Ireland furnished their quota of 80 men, since that was the whole number according to the statement of my noble friend. All the Catholics are by this same high authority, implicated in the rebellion, and have their share of the guilt imputed to them. I allude to the documents, which I have read with shame and indignation, and when I heard my noble friend talk of the temper and moderation of the Irish government, I did expect that it would have been shown that their conduct had been such as to remove every distinction, to prevent the recurrence of those differences that have so long disturbed the peace and tranquillity of that country. If that has been the policy as I am sure it was the duty of government, ill, indeed, has that end been endeavoured to be accomplished! Good

God! Sir, that in the 19th century, there should be found a man of great talents, fitted for great good in a state; of great learning too, but that which he has lately displayed, I could almost have wished that nobody had it now, for I had hoped it had been exploded at least two centuries ago:—that this learned person should fill the office of a great legislator, and the highest as a legal magistrate, and that he should be appointed to preside in the only country where such antiquated doctrine could do effectual mischief! I do not say it is a fault, but it certainly is a great misfortune that such a person, with such sentiments should be placed in such a station. I cannot augur favourably of the disposition of a government in which such sentiments prevail; nor do I think it likely that Ireland can ever be tranquillized as long as they shall be acted upon. I cannot think it likely that those pictures of quietness, contentment, and happiness, which have been so gratuitously afforded to the House, and so diligently laid before it, that the rebellion was at an end for ever, that the principle on which it was fomented was destroyed, that Ireland was, by the rooting out of prejudices, become one body of harmony in temper and united in object, will ever be realized if the policy is to be that to which I have just alluded, I am willing to give government credit for their intention to do away all animosity in Ireland. I do not mean to say that the correspondence to which I allude is to be considered, nor do I state it, as a fire-brand which threatens the country with destruction, but I do state that great officer, as enjoying the full confidence and a great portion of the power of government, and whether he was the intended vehicle of publishing such sentiments, I do not know, yet it has all the effect of design, and I cannot help looking upon the publication of such sentiments as conveying to the public the *animus* of government. Whether these sentiments are really the sentiments of the government, or no, I will not pretend to say, but the great character to whom I have alluded is a member of the Irish government; and the government in which such a mind predominates—that is to say a mind governed by such principles as have been published by that great person who had great influence—where such a spirit presides—and where such a spirit rules, and such opinions are cherished, the government, influenced by it, I am sure, cannot be conciliating nor agreeable nor can it hold forth any prospect of comfort to say nothing of happiness, to the Irish people; a government which permits itself to cherish such sentiments, discovers an *animus*

that affords no comfort to those who are governed: it is an imprudent government, and very ill adapted for the safety of the public.—As to the vigilance of the Irish government now, when they have been roused by two explosions, that appears to me as no reason why the present inquiry should not be gone into. With respect to the manner in which the affairs of Ireland were neglected previous to and on the 23d of July, I contend, that the negligence of government was so great, as not to keep on their stations the most important officers of state. Mr. Wickham, a gentleman who from his station and talent might have rendered essential service to Ireland, at the time of the insurrection, had not been desired to remain on his post, but was on an excursion of pleasure and actually in Yorkshire when the first intelligence reached him of the insurrection in Ireland; but, however, no blame attaches to this gentleman upon this occasion; it only makes the accusation the more weighty on those who ought to bear it. No consideration of the weight of personal responsibility on any body ought to induce the House to neglect its duty, which I apprehend it will do, if it declines entering into the present inquiry. I see no inconvenience likely to arise from this investigation that can be put into the scale and weighed against the public benefit likely to result from it. I have the greatest esteem for my noble friend, and the highest opinion of his talents and abilities; but I am so entirely dissatisfied with his arguments upon this occasion, that I shall most certainly vote for the present motion.

Mr. Archdall.—Sir, I beg the attention of the House to a few observations which I am desirous of submitting to their consideration respecting the present motion. I am not a man who wishes to imitate any other man's manner, nor follow any other man's sentiments. I rise at present partly to offer my acknowledgements to the right hon. gent. who has just sat down, for the great attention he has paid to Ireland, and for the lively interest with which he seems on the present occasion to be impressed in favour of that part of the united empire. After having said thus much, I hope I may be allowed to doubt whether any of the good purposes intended to be obtained by the motion are likely to be the result of it. The hon. Baronet who brought it forward, said, in one part of his speech, that he did not know why the hon. admiral who originally brought it forward had given up the question. I believe I can tell him; and my opinion is, that he meant to clear up the

character of a very good and meritorious officer, which he thought had been wounded by the manner in which he had been obliged to leave Ireland, but which he has since found, from the most unequivocal and repeated declarations of his Majesty's ministers, was not in any respect impeached by them, nor did any one of them ever entertain for a moment, the least thought that was not highly honourable to that gallant and deserving officer. I think the motion assumes also more than it ought to do. It assumes, in the first place that the Irish government has not done its duty; and 2dly, that this is the best time for going into an inquiry on the subject, I cannot see the matter at all in this light. I see nothing in the conduct of the Irish government, on the 23d of July, that is, in any degree, so extraordinary as many hon. gentlemen would endeavour to represent it. Many other governments besides this, have at former periods been in equally unfortunate circumstances. I think I can, in my own person, remember to have seen a much larger city than Dublin, which was also the metropolis of a much more extensive country, in a state of conflagration for several successive days, when her prisons were in broad day thrown open, and burned to the ground; private houses marked out for pillage and devastation, and its high court of Parliament actually sitting during the whole time, and this done by an infatuated and drunken multitude, not confined to a few hundreds, as was the case in Dublin, but amounting to at least 40,000; and yet no mention has ever been made of calling for an inquiry into the conduct of the government of that country to which I allude. It is very possible, I think, that secret meetings may take place without government becoming acquainted with them. I agree with the right hon. gent., that the death of Lord Kilwarden has given a melancholy aspect to this affair, and has caused an infinite deal of blame to be thrown on the Irish government which it does not merit. It is, I allow, an event deeply to be deplored; and I should be the last man in the world who would mean to say anything in extenuation of murder; but I wish the matter should not be exaggerated, in order to throw an additional degree of odium on the government. How can it be supposed that 400 of the mob of Dublin, half drunk, should be capable of putting to a risqué the security and safety of the metropolis, guarded at the same moment by a garrison amounting to 4,000 disciplined regular forces. My arguments on a former occasion, respecting the state of Ireland,

have been adverted to, as describing that country in a different situation to what it had at a subsequent period of no great distance of time, turned out to be. I then said, that in my opinion, "if the French should land there, every loyal man would join to oppose them from patriotism, and every Jacobin would do the same from the principle of revenge." I think what I then delivered as my own sentiments have been since very fully illustrated and proved by the declaration of Emmett, who is generally allowed to have been the most enthusiastic of all the rebel leaders. On his trial, he expressly declared, that if the French were to land, he would oppose them to the utmost with fire and sword. This declaration has been fully confirmed by that of Russell, who though not so enthusiastic was reckoned the most steady of all the rebel chiefs.—I beg leave to say but one word more, and that is on the allusion that has been made to the correspondence between the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and the Earl of Fingal. I regret that this correspondence has been brought before the public; and I cannot help thinking, that next to the impropriety of publishing those letters, that of bringing them into discussion in this place, or indeed, I might say, in any place whatever, is the most to be deprecated. I cannot, however, agree with the right hon. gent. that these letters discover what he terms the animus of government. I do not conceive that government is, or ought to be supposed answerable for the conduct of judicial characters. The great personage who has been alluded to, only acted as Lord Chancellor, and if he has in his judicial character mixed anything that is political in its tendency, it might, perhaps, be wished that he had not done so; for it strikes me, that judicial characters should interfere as little as possible, with politics. Such an interference may often be inconvenient and seldom useful; still, however, I contend that it is no proof of any particular animus in the government, nor ought the government to be answerable for it, I consider the present motion as altogether unnecessary, especially after so long a time has elapsed; and as such I shall give it my most decided negative.

Mr. Dawson.—Sir; as I happened to be in Ireland at the time when the insurrection broke out, I hope I shall be indulged with the opportunity of shortly delivering my opinions on the subject. I am willing to give the hon. baronet every degree of credit for the purity of his intentions in bringing forward the present motion; but I think

it a fair subject of inquiry, how far the agitation of such an inquiry, under existing circumstances, can be either advantageous or politic. I wish to ascertain precisely what are the objects to which the motion is meant to apply. As far as I understand its objects, they are either through the medium of reference to the affairs of Ireland, to infer an accusation against his Majesty's ministers here, or they are directed to the end of pointing out certain faults committed by the administration of Ireland, with a view of preventing their recurrence, by removing the present Government of Ireland from the management of affairs in that country. On these points I beg leave to make a few observations.—If the object of the hon. mover, or of those who support the motion, is to make through the medium of Ireland an attack on ministers here, I cannot think this a fair or manly mode of introducing the discussion. I cannot help objecting strongly to such an insidious way of bringing an attack on the government, and I feel it to be my duty to resist it in the most decided terms. It is degrading to the character of the people of Ireland to make use of them as a vehicle for the introduction of such a very ungenerous mode of proceeding, in an attack on men, to whom the Sovereign has entrusted the management of public affairs. It is sporting with the feelings of a brave and high-spirited people to make a stalking horse of their pretended rights, merely as a pretext for bringing forward a favourite subject of opposition. No man would stand up more earnestly for the true rights and privileges of Ireland, than I would, but if poison be introduced in order to dislodge ministers from their places, I cannot consent that it should be covertly introduced through the circuitous channels of Irish connexions. On this ground I shall, therefore, decidedly oppose the present motion. If, on the other hand, it is the object of the hon. baronet to prevent the repetition of past errors, by pointing out existing abuses, and by recommending the dismissal of the present lord lieutenant of Ireland, the motion, in my mind, is not less obnoxious. And here I must be permitted to declare, that I consider the silence of the Irish members on the subject now introduced to the House, as the best evidence of their conviction, that the motion is altogether unnecessary, and applicable to no practical useful purpose. Had the motion been loudly called for, it is not presuming too far, to suppose, that at least one out of the 100 Irish members would have been found to bring the matter under consideration, and call for inquiry into a matter in which the

character of the government, as well as the safety of the empire is so materially involved. If any Irish member thought that the safety of Ireland had been neglected, it is not asking too much, to be allowed credit, when I suppose that some one would have come forward, not to solicit as a matter of favour, but as a matter of clear undoubted right, that the affairs of that part of the United Kingdom, should occupy the peculiar attention of the Imperial legislature. The silence which has taken place is, I must contend, not the silence of indifference, but a silence proceeding from a conviction, that there is no real ground of accusation against government; a silence arising from a persuasion that the measures adopted are the best adapted to the existing circumstances of the empire. This is the silence observed by the Irish members, contra-distinguished from that silence which might be supposed to arise from any idea that the subject was one on which, from considerations of prudence, silence was to be recommended. The charge against the government of Ireland has on this, as on several former occasions, been brought forward by the British part of the representatives in Parliament, and I have already stated, that when a charge is thus directly urged, silence is no longer expedient. It then becomes the duty of the Irish representatives candidly to deliver their opinions, and it is in the exercise of this opinion, that I shall at present explicitly declare my sentiments.—If, at an earlier period after the events which took place on the 23rd of July, I had been called upon to deliver my opinion as to the expediency of inquiry, perhaps I might have seen room for considerable hesitation and doubt. If the object of that inquiry had been to afford an opportunity for a most gallant and respectable officer, who from certain insinuations felt himself injured to clear up his character, I should, in that case, have seen pretty strong grounds for going into a committee of inquiry. It is what equity and honour require, that the unspotted glory and character, of a gallant soldier should be free from every imputation, but no such cause as this now exists. The hon. officer's friends and relations are satisfied, that no sort of blame is meant to be attached to any part of his conduct on the 23d of July. The explanation is satisfactory, and this part of the question is, therefore, put to rest. The hon. general has not demanded further inquiry. His relations have not insisted on it. His friends have not persisted in urging any additional testimony in favour of his conduct on the occasion, to which the motion of the hon. baronet goes.

I wish, therefore, to press it on the consideration of the hon. mover, whether any good can result from pressing the question? By persevering in it, his Majesty's ministers will be placed in a most disagreeable dilemma. If, on the one hand, ministers, however much convinced of its impolicy, were to agree to the committee proposed, I desire to know what would be the consequence, as applicable to the people of Ireland? In this case they would be inclined to ask, on what principle it was that they were to obey a government of whose ability and integrity the most serious suspicions were entertained, and whose conduct was made the ground of parliamentary inquiry? On the other hand, if the inquiry were refused, a suspicion might be excited, that the refusal on the part of ministers arose from a dread of having their whole conduct fully and impartially investigated. I cannot but wish, therefore, that the question should not be pressed, at least at the present moment. If, however, the question is to be persisted in, I beg the House shortly to consider what is the real state of affairs, so far as the events of the 23d of July are involved. I will not pretend to justify the Irish government, by pretending that if all the circumstances which gave rise to the events of that day had been fully foreseen, the conduct of government would have been what it was in other circumstances. It does not at all follow from this, that because the government did not foresee the whole circumstances of the conspiracy, that therefore they were negligent in the use of proper means of precaution. I am ready, therefore, to admit, that to a certain degree the Irish government were surprised. When I say this, I beg leave to be distinctly understood. The government were surprised, not for want of foresight, but they were surprised because the insurrection itself took place under a certain degree of surprise. The attempt at rebellion was not only unnatural in itself, but altogether premature. It was an abortion of a conspiracy which the best doctor could not have prevented. Government was in possession of information that insurrections were hatching, but the precise moment when the explosion was to take place was not known, because the rebels themselves twenty-four hours before the riot burst forth had not finally concerted their plan of operations, or the period of open rebellion. So far therefore, the conduct of the Irish government does not appear to be liable to any very serious objection. But I wish now for a little to call the attention of the House to the particular circumstance under which the lord lieut. entered on the exercise of his

public functions. He entered on his office immediately after the Union had taken place. At a time when, whatever may be said of the general advantages of that fatal measure, Dublin was suffering from it the greatest calamities, and might literally be said to be destroyed. He entered on his vice-royalty when the content of the capital of Ireland was annihilated, when its trade and commerce were at a stand, when its public buildings were hastening to decay, when its nobility and gentry, who were in the habit of spending in Dublin the half of their time, and more than the half of their money, had deserted that favourite seat of rational and elegant enjoyment. It was under all these discouraging and unfavourable circumstances that the present lord lieut. of Ireland undertook the arduous task of the government of that country. Lord Hardwicke has done more towards drawing the nobility and gentry who were left in Ireland to reside in Dublin, than any other lord lieut. who has been in that city for many years. If the object of the present motion is really intended to withdraw Lord Hardwicke from that govt., Ireland will, indeed, be a very great loser. I beg leave to assure the House, that I am not, by any means, speaking as the panegyrist of Lord Hardwicke. I do not even know him. As lord lieut. of Ireland, I never saw him; but I know that his Lordship has by the courteousness and amenity of his manners, and by the conciliatory measures he has adopted, very much reconciled the citizens of Dublin to their situation, and rendered them much more contented and happy than they were before he went there. I beg the House to recollect what use Lord Hardwicke has made of the extraordinary powers which have been entrusted to him. Has he ever shewn a sanguinary disposition? Has he ever, in a single instance, abused those powers? Certainly I can answer no! He has always acted with the greatest moderation; and tempering the most rigid justice with the utmost humanity, has made those extraordinary powers go hand in hand with the best interests of the country, and subservient to its safety and protection. During the administration of this noble lord, the volunteer force is in a far better state of discipline than it was ever known to be before. The present commander in chief, lord Cathcart, has repeatedly expressed his approbation and admiration of it; and if the enemy should ever chance to set foot on those shores, I will be bold to say, they would be not only surprised and daunted, but they would be astonished to see so great

a host of loyal subjects and real patriots in so finished and high a state of discipline. —If the inquiry could go so far as to put that excellent and invaluable magistrate (lord Kilwarden) on the bench again, I should be happy to give it every support in my power. But if its object be to remove the present govt., I shall oppose it as indirect to the purpose for which it was intended. If the hon. bart. means to shew by it that Ireland is not well governed, I think the motion groundless. The present govt. I esteem a very good one; under its auspices the citizen soldier is now in a complete state of srray, and thus arrayed, is eager and zealous to defend his country against all attacks from external enemies, as well as against those internal foes and rebels with which it has the misfortune to be infested. In my opinion, English members are not the best judges of what is most advantageous to the interests of Ireland. I could not pretend to judge so well what would suit the particular interests of Wolverhampton and its neighbourhood as the hon. bart. could; and no doubt the hon. bart's. word and opinion would have far greater weight there than anything I could urge on affairs which relate immediately to that part of the country. For all these reasons, Sir, I shall give my vote against the present motion.

Earl Temple.—Sir, whatever difference of opinion may exist as to the result of the motion of the hon. bart., there can exist only one sentiment as to the propriety of its being brought forward. Ministers must feel gratified that the challenge which has been so often given, has at length been accepted, that the gauntlet which has been so often thrown down, has, at length been taken up by some of the gentlemen on the other side. The introduction of the motion must also afford satisfaction to the people of Ireland, as it must show them that what is connected with their interests or their safety, are subjects of the deepest interest to the Imperial Parliament. The public at large must rejoice at the discussion as calculated to remove that veil which has, hitherto, been so studiously thrown over the events of the 23rd of July. It now, I believe, is pretty generally agreed that blame does exist somewhere, and it is a matter of the greatest importance that it should be ascertained in what quarter that blame lies. If ministers adhere to their former professions, it is their duty to court instead of resisting inquiry. This is not a question personal to Lord Hardwicke, but if it is fairly entered into, involving the conduct of the administration here, in com-

mon with the Government of Ireland. If blame can be clearly brought home to the government of Ireland: if it can be shewn that they were shamefully deficient in foresight and precaution, it is impossible for ministers here to free themselves from a certain share of the blame attached to such criminal negligence.—When, Sir, I had the honour of being the bearer of the Act of Union to the other House of Parliament, I confess that I felt a certain degree of pride, in being selected to carry to the other branch of the legislature, a measure from which I expected the most important benefits to both countries. To the period of peace, whenever it should arrive, I looked forward for the completion of this great national Act. From its operation I anticipated the introduction of a more wise and liberal policy in Ireland, the adoption of a system of wise conciliation, designed to cover in eternal oblivion all former sources of animosity, to heal up all old wounds, to place the commerce of the whole empire on a footing of the most lasting friendship. At length peace arrived, but with it none of the blessings which had been anticipated. Every thing continued on the same footing in Ireland. Ancient grievances remained, and no effort at conciliation was resorted to. Instead of measures of beneficent improvement, ministers were studying polemical theology. New causes of agitation were introduced, and instead of mildness, new seeds of rancour were sown. No sooner were we told that we were in a state of profound peace, than we were apprized, that every act of the government with whom the peace was concluded, had been marked with insolence and aggression. Hardly were we informed that Ireland was in a state of perfect tranquillity, than we were told that rebellion had once more made its appearance in that unhappy land. It was impossible to attach any meaning to the declaration of ministers. All their declarations were marked by inconsistency, fickleness, and indecision. We are really at a loss to know, even at this moment, in what light ministers are desirous that the insurrection of the 23rd of July ought to be considered. At one time, they described it as a miserable riot, and contemptible assemblage of ruffians, making their appearance in Thomas Street, extending their progress to Dirty Lane, and terminating their career in Cutpurse Row. On another occasion, when a different description suited their views, the first law officer endeavoured to implicate in this conspiracy the great mass of the people of Ireland. When such contradictory accounts are

given, is it not, I beg leave to ask, fair to go into an inquiry on a subject confessedly of the highest interest and importance? It seems there was a private powder-mill in the very heart of Dublin and government were totally ignorant of its existence, till the explosion took place, by which it was blown up, and thus, for the first time, brought into the observation of government. I have heard of private stills, private coining rooms, and so forth, but this is the first time I ever heard of a private powder-mill, [Mr. Sec. Yorke said across the table, that it was not a powder-mill.] I say it was a powder-mill, and this difference shows the necessity of inquiry. Well, it blew up, and no notice was taken, nor any precautions whatever; the prevailing maxim was, "the less is said the better," and so ended the history of the powder-mill, in which they found upwards of 30,000 ball cartridges. About the same time some casks filled with balls were discovered; but still no inquiry is instituted as to the existence of treasonable designs. The commander in chief is on a tour through the island. Another of the lords in council has retired to his country seat. The lord lieutenant has renounced the cares of administration. The whole weight of government is thrown on Mr. Secretary Marsden, and how is it that he contrives to perform the duties of this great office? On the Thursday before the rebellion broke out, Mr. Clarke, a most respectable manufacturer in the neighbourhood of Dublin, waits on him and informs him of his suspicions of an intended insurrection. He is dismissed with a desire to continue his inquiries, and to wait on Mr. Marsden the next day. The next day he repeats his visit, and is then told to appear at the Castle on Saturday at two o'clock, to meet the lord lieutenant, who was then to hold a council. A meeting with Mr. Clarke the next day takes place, and Mr. Secretary Marsden is then convinced that a rising on the same night is intended. A message is then sent to the lord lieutenant requesting his immediate attendance at the Castle. The lord lieutenant does arrive accompanied by the commander in chief, and some measures are at length concerted for the protection of the capital. If a council is held who are those summoned to attend it? Is the lord chancellor one of the number? No. Is the lord chief justice invited? Unfortunately no. In short, not a single privy councillor is invited to be present at these deliberations. The great object is to avoid all unnecessary alarm. If the greatest dangers ensue, still if alarm can be avoided, all is well; *ruat cælum*, but be sure to

avoid alarm, was the great burden of the song on that memorable day. Satisfied with recommending all tendency to avoid alarm, the lord lieutenant retires to his country seat, and Mr. Secretary Marsden again resumes the uncontrolled management of affairs. That hon. gent., seems, however, to proceed with wonderful indifference. He allows the time to pass on, and still the police are in no situation to repel riot as soon as it should make its appearance. Every where I see want of foresight, decision, or vigour. Even the following day, the lord lieutenant does not issue his proclamation for the apprehension of the atrocious murderers of the lord chief justice. He goes to chapel as usual, and it is not till the 25th that a council is summoned, that any thing like a vigorous act is resolved on. The only defence I have yet heard set up is, that government and the rebels were both surprised together in a dark night; and I leave it to the House whether that is a reason sufficient to ward off an inquiry? It has been clearly shown that the lord mayor of Dublin had no notice whatever of the danger of this rebellion. So far from it, his house was robbed of arms. But it is said that Mr. Alderman Alexander, the presiding magistrate, had notice—and what did he do? He went and slept out of Dublin, and devolved the whole duty on Mr. Oliver Carleton, the high constable; and the lord lieutenant went out of town, and left all the weight and responsibility of government on the shoulders of the under secretary, Mr. Marsden. I shall not trouble the House any longer. I cannot conceive a better time for inquiry than the present moment, and therefore the motion meets with my most cordial approbation.

Gen. *Tarleton*.—Sir, I beg the indulgence of the House while I offer a few short and temperate observations. The situation in which I was placed in Ireland, enables me to form an accurate judgment. I was placed upon the Irish staff in last spring, but I was not ordered to join till after the explosion of the rebellion on the 23d of July. I then lost no time in repairing to Ireland. On my arrival in Dublin, some days had elapsed, and the transaction of the 23d of July began to be viewed in different lights. I had opportunities of conversing with all parties, with the military officers, the commander in chief, the chief secretary, the officers of the volunteers, in short, with all those who were best enabled to furnish me with the means of forming an opinion, and the general impression of all I heard was, that the Irish government was taken by surprise. If the

House goes into the inquiry, it will be found whether, in fact, it was so or not; but I confess that was the impression made on my mind. From what has come out on the trials, which Mr. Wickham directed in the best manner, I am sure he was convinced, with me, that government was surprised. I will ask, if a powder mill had exploded at Charing-cross, and no measures were taken by Sir R. Ford to obtain information about it, would not every one be surprised? The explosion in Patrick-street was as near to the Castle as Charing-cross to this House, or to St. James's; and active inquiry might have been the means of preventing the insurrection and blood-shed of the 23d July. With respect to the hon. officer (Gen. Fox), the intelligence did not reach him till it was too late. Is it, otherwise, to be supposed that he would have put off the council of war, which he held in consequence, to so late an hour, that one of the officers who attended at it, was obliged to return back, the insurrection having already commenced, and the other found his safety in having a good pair of legs, (which is often very useful to have on such occasions) and being acquainted with the bye-ways. The noble Lord dwelt much on the strength of a garrison of 4,000 men, and conceived the Bank to be particularly secure, from being placed between the royal barracks and the 62d reg. On speaking with the Col. of the 62d reg., I was informed, that the orders reached him so late, and from such a variety of quarters, that he could collect only 16 men, in any sufficient time. The same officer informed me of the situation of a depôt of powder, of which he informed Mr. Sec. Wickham, but that depôt was not discovered till after the rebellion, the ramifications of which were very extensive. I heard at Naas, the capital of the county of Kildare, that information had been conveyed from thence to government, but that it had been little attended to. I found that the conspiracy also extended to the south beyond Cork, where the conspirators learned, by means of telegraphic fires, the ill success of the insurrection in Dublin, before the King's officers knew it in Cork. It was by this information only that the insurrection was prevented from being general over the country. I do not think that Gen. Fox, an officer who has done most meritorious service from a very early age, should be deprived of a command, superior in importance to every other in the service, without any reason being assigned for that privation. It was a command of much difficulty and danger, but there was the more room for reaping glory if the enemy should come. On

these grounds I conceive the inquiry to be loudly called for.

Mr. Secretary *Yorke*.—Sir; what has been just stated by the hon. general, the House cannot view in any other light than as hearsay evidence; and, perhaps, had the hon. gen. remained some time longer in the country, he might have met with further information, that might have induced him to change his opinion on the subject of the Irish government being taken by surprise. I am not anxious to oppose the motion, as I am certain that the lord lieutenant does not wish to shrink from an inquiry, and shall, therefore, confine myself strictly to facts. I coincide in opinion with my hon. friend (Mr. Dawson), and my noble friend (Lord Castlereagh), that there is no parliamentary grounds laid for an inquiry; and also, that there must be great inconvenience attending it; but still, if the House thinks proper to accede to the motion, I shall not object to it.—As facts have been referred to, I shall endeavour to set them in a right point of view. The hon. general (Tarleton) concluded with an observation relative to the recall of Gen. Fox. Now, I do not know that he was recalled. A difference of opinion had arisen between him and the lord lieut. which made it necessary that one of them should withdraw. Gen. Fox thought proper to return to England, and thus the matter ended.—I think it necessary, before I proceed further, to advert to the principle on which my noble relative accepted the charge which has been entrusted to him; the leading feature of which was, that a system of conciliation was to be adopted, and without indulging the idea that the diseases of the public mind were completely healed. And when this is seriously attended to, I think the House cannot blame my noble relation for being extremely cautious in receiving information from all quarters of intended insurrection and rebellion, which might tend to create alarms, and to revive old animosities. Undoubtedly, the Irish govt. did receive information that some men, concerned in the former rebellion, were desirous to recommence their old bad practices; but every account coincided in this, that the situation of the country was greatly improved, and was every day growing better. At this period the war broke out; and the Irish administration, combining the account of the enemy's intentions, with those of insurrections in the country, the lord lieut. suggested whether it would not be advisable to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act; the govt. of this country wished, however, from principles which the House will not very severely

criticize, not to resort to so strong a measure without an absolute necessity, and therefore proposed to wait till they saw whether any thing of that kind would be attempted. In this situation of affairs, gen. Fox arrived in Ireland on the 1st June last. It happened that some time before and at that moment the county of Kildare had shewn strong symptoms of insurrection, and on the 12th July they were considered to be so threatening, that the lord lieutenant recommended it to the commander in chief to send troops to 3 or 4 different places in the county, in order to keep down that mischievous spirit. The commander in chief, gen. Fox, set out on a military tour into the interior. On the 16th the explosion, as it is called, broke out in Patrick-street, Dublin, which has been much exaggerated; it having been said by some that a powder-mill blew up. Now what is the state of the fact? Two persons only were at home at the time, one of whom being nearly suffocated, in the act of throwing up a window, so cut his arm with the glass that he bled to death: the other, who was also nearly suffocated, was a poor ignorant man, and could give no further account than that the powder was brought there to make up the combustibles. This affair, however, led gov't. to make further inquiries, and the lord lieutenant wrote on the 18th of July to the commander in chief, informing him of the transactions. This letter was not received by the general, as the lord lieutenant expected, for it was sent by the military secretaries to him at Tullamore, and from his having changed his course, it did not reach him till he came to Dublin. The lord lieutenant, however, concluded with reason, that he had received it; and therefore it was, that he replied to the commander in chief, that he had nothing particular to communicate.—On the night of Thursday the 21st, the general returned. In the course of Thursday, the only fresh circumstance was the alarm of Mr. Clark, an eminent manufacturer, who stated certain appearances and dispositions on the part of his workmen, indicative of an approaching disturbance. On Friday he returned, and said, he was convinced his alarm was not founded. Now, will gentlemen contend that gov't. were actually obliged to know what happened before it happened? Or do they mean to say that gov't. knowing what they did, did not do every thing that was necessary? I deny that assertion.—Many things having been stated with respect to the complaints of different persons against the Irish gov't. for their conduct on that occasion, I shall produce three letters to Mr. Marsden from Mr.

Clarke, col. Aylmer, and Mr. Goring, and one from Mr. Finlay to Mr. Wickham. [Here the right hon. sec. of state read parts of these letters; that of Mr. Clarke particularly alluded to an article in "Cobbett's Political Register." Mr. Clarke declared in his letter, that he had always received the most polite and ready attention to his communications, and praised the conduct of gov't. in respect to the transactions alluded to.] On the Saturday the accounts became more serious. The lord lieutenant received the letter of Mr. Marsden whilst gen. Fox was with him. The hon. general who spoke last, has asserted that the gov't. was surprised. But how can that be possibly for a moment contended, when they were so well prepared at 2 o'clock, and the insurrection did not take place till 9, and there was a garrison of 4,000 men? until after the explosion in Patrick-street, I believe the secret was known only to 8 persons. Mr. Emmett, the fabricator of the plot, had spent his property, about 3,000*l.*, in purchasing this depot; he had, therefore, no need to go about for voluntary subscriptions, as had been the case in some such schemes, and thereby make it known. As to the quantity of arms in this place, there has been considerable mistakes. The man who was the keeper of the depot has said, that the whole consisted of 4 muskets, 12 blunderbusses, 3,000 pikes, and 12 case-pistols, with a rich general's uniform, and some others which were worn when the riot broke out. Now, at 3 o'clock, the lord lieutenant and the commander in chief, were apprised of the probability of a riot. As soon as the general got home to Kilmainham, he wrote to col. Manley, to take care of the depot at Island Bridge &c., at the time stating, that he apprehended a rising, in consequence of information received by government. After this statement, it seems impossible to say, that either the civil or the military gov't. was surprised; for certainly the riot happened to neither of them unexpectedly. The garrison was fully sufficient for every purpose. It consisted of the 16th reg. of dragoons, one of the finest regts. in Europe, of the 26th, 31st, 38th, and 62d reg. of veteran infantry, of 6 or 800 men each, together with the depot of artillery, making altogether about 4,000 men.—Now, if a comparison is made between Dublin and London, and it is considered how much the former is inferior in size to the latter, it must be admitted that such a force was fully sufficient for such a city as Dublin. If any man will say, and can prove, that that force was not sufficient for the defence of Dublin, then, indeed, I will admit that blame does

attach to the Irish govt. So much for the state of the military defence of Dublin. I shall next revert to the state of that place, so far as regarded the civil power, and the precautions which had been taken by the municipal officers. The lord mayor of Dublin was informed of the intended insurrection, in the course of the day of the 23d. and had been with Mr. Marsden on the subject. It also appears from the examination of Mr. Carlton, that Alderman Alexander had been informed of a riot being expected to take place that day, and desired he might be prepared for it. In addition to this I shall refer the House to the declaration of a person whose name is very well known on the late state trials; I mean Mr. Wilson the peace officer, who certainly conducted himself with a great deal of precision, during the affair in question, who was on the very spot, at the time of the insurrection, and was engaged with Emmett's party. Mr. Wilson states, in his evidence, that on the 23d of July, before six in the evening, he received a note informing him, that the insurrection was expected, and desiring him to be on the alert; and he gave orders accordingly to the peace officers under him. It also appears, that the commander in chief wrote to col. Manley, on the same day, informing him, that govt. had received information of an intended rising of the people, and desired that the necessary precautions might be taken without creating any alarm.—A noble lord has particularly dwelt on the circumstances of govt. having desired that no alarm might be made, and attempted to draw an inference from that, as if govt. had not been aware of any danger. I cannot state particularly what the directions may have been, which the Irish govt. gave at the time in question; but it is very probable, that upon a consultation having taken place, it was agreed that whatever measures of precaution were judged proper to be taken, they should be adopted with as little appearance of alarm as possible. If similar measures of precaution were to be adopted in this country, I should conceive it to be the duty of govt. to see that everything was done in a manner the least calculated to give an alarm to the public, I will put it to any Irish gent. who happened to be then present, and who recollects the consternation which was spread all over Ireland in 1728, in consequence of the stopping of the mail coaches; whether it is not highly prudent to avoid any step that might spread terror and confusion throughout the interior of the country. This precaution was actually taken on a late occasion, and it was not thought necessary to stop the

mail coaches. A great deal has been said concerning the postscript of a letter written by the lord lieut. to general Fox on the day in question, and in which he was understood to have informed the commander in chief, that he had taken greater precautions than were necessary. Now, in order to judge of that circumstance, it will be necessary for the House to hear the whole of the letter, as well as the postscript, and also to know the circumstances that gave rise to the letter. On that day, Col. Aylmer came from the county of Kildare, and gave information that parties of insurgents were coming up from that county, and that there was reason to apprehend they would attack the Lodge in the Phoenix Park, on their way to Dublin. As soon as the intelligence was received by the lord lieut. he wrote to gen. Fox, stating what he had heard, desiring that precautionary measures might be taken, but no alarm excited. When he had finished the letter, there arrived at the lodge a reinforcement of soldiers; upon which the postscript was written, and stated, that as an alarm had been already spread, the precautionary measure of sending those men would add to it. The words of the postscript are, "I understand you have reinforced the guard here, by the addition of an officer and 30 men. I suppose you have received some other information besides what I have given you. As an alarm has already taken place, I think it will be increased by this measure." Now gent. must plainly perceive, that these words in the postscript related solely to the defensive measures that were adopted in the Phoenix Park. I have now made a plain and correct statement of the different circumstances relative to the late insurrection in Dublin. I have no personal reason whatsoever to induce me to oppose this motion, and shall leave it to the House to judge, whether or not there is any foundation for blame against the Irish Government.

Mr. Fox. Sir, I should have contented myself with offering but a very few arguments in favour of the motion of the hon. bart., but some of the remarks of the right hon. gent. who has just sat down will compel me to go a little more into detail than I intended, and to preface what I intended to say with a few preliminary observations. In some respects the right hon. gent. and myself are placed in similar situations. He has the same feelings towards one of the parties, whose name has been so often mentioned in this discussion, as I have for the other. There is another point of similarity in regard to our wishes on the subject of this inquiry, in which, indeed, he goes beyond me; he says that lord Hard-

wicke is desirous to have his conduct canvassed. My hon. relation does not go quite so far, he only has no objection to the inquiry. The right hon. gent. says he will not oppose the inquiry; here indeed I go beyond him, for I will vote for the inquiry. He may be, and no doubt is, a much better member of Parliament, and a much better statesman; but in promoting this inquiry, I consider myself the better brother of the two. It is true, however, that when the right hon. gentleman said, that personally he would not oppose the inquiry, he took care immediately to correct himself; well aware, probably of the influence which such a declaration from him might have on many in this House; and while he avowed a wish for inquiry himself, he seemed anxious to shew, that to others who were in a less delicate situation, no Parliamentary ground had been stated for the motion. And here I feel myself obliged to state that kind of complaint which I have frequently been under the necessity of making, against the practice of men in office resisting an inquiry by employing arguments, founded on partial extracts from papers and documents, not in the possession or perhaps within the reach of other members. Such partial extracts generally contain only what is in favour of the ministerial argument, while every thing of a contrary tendency, or which could explain the parts that are insisted upon, are altogether withheld. The justice of this complaint of mine, receives a most forcible illustration from the example of this night. Respecting the anxious wish of exciting no alarm, so often ascribed to the lord lieutenant, the right hon. gent. says, "How do I know, as a member of Parliament, that so much stress has been laid by the lord lieutenant on giving no alarm?" To this I say, that however ignorant he may be as a member of Parliament, he cannot be ignorant of the fact that on this point no more stress has been laid than the documents fully justify. I take upon me to say, that I as an individual do know that the lord lieutenant must have been exceedingly anxious on this head; for throughout the correspondence, of which the right hon. gent. has read us what he thought useful for himself, the sentiments occur over and over again, "They may defend the lord lieutenant for his feeling; but let them not attempt to deny its existence. Let us, then, have the whole of the papers laid before us, or let us have none of them. It will then be impossible to give a false gloss by garbled extracts, and, upon a consideration of the whole, the House will be able to judge and decide. I am confident that they must then see that the utmost

anxiety to avoid alarm prevailed in lord Hardwicke's mind; and that he disbelieved, totally disbelieved, the intelligence which had been communicated of an impending disturbance. As the right hon. gent. considered himself obliged to advert to certain facts, in which he felt a personal interest, I must be indulged in following his example; but first I must remark on what another hon. gent. said, as to the notices which have been given on this subject. He says that an hon. relation of mine gave notice of a motion respecting the late commander in chief in Ireland; and that I had likewise given notice of a motion. In this he is mistaken; for I always felt that however I might be gratified in supporting this, or any motion of a more personal nature, I was not the most proper person to bring the business before the House. My hon. relation (admiral Berkeley) said, that if it should be stated to the House by ministers that no blame was imputed to gen. Fox, then it was not the wish of that officer, that any inquiry should be gone into on his account. This the right hon. gent. thought fit to state, and of course the motion of my hon. relation fell to the ground. If, however, the government here, as in Ireland, are still disposed to defend themselves by imputing that blame to my hon. relation, late the commander in chief in Ireland, the infamy is theirs and he stands acquitted. Here let me ask, however, whether Lord Hardwicke, as well as ministers here, has acquitted gen. Fox, and ceased to defend himself by imputing blame to that gallant officer? Let us look at the conduct of the Irish government and we must be convinced that they have not. The right hon. gent. says, that a coolness arose between the lord lieutenant and the commander in chief, and it was impossible that both could remain in the offices they held. But when did this coolness arise? I assert that this coolness did not arise till many days after the affair of the 23d and that a perfect good understanding continued between them. But when accounts came from England, stating the impression made by that affair in this country, and when the lord lieutenant, perhaps to his second surprise, found that every body was crying out against the Irish government for having been surprised, then perhaps, it was insinuated to him by those around him, that the best way to defend himself was to blame others, and that the disgrace of the commander in chief would screen the castle from all censure. Something of this kind seems to have been the progress, if we can judge from the effect. From that moment, indeed, a coolness did exist, and the com-

mander in chief did resign, because he knew that it was the wish of the lord lieutenant that he should do so : and in such circumstances my hon. relation, feeling that he could not serve the public usefully, did resign ; but surely that was a very different thing from a voluntary resignation, and it must have been considered so by the world. What then, was to be the effect of such a resignation ? If the lord lieutenant of Ireland was so ignorant of the ways of mankind, and of the modes of thinking, as to imagine that at such a moment, to signify a wish for the resignation of the commander in chief was not to give an impression unfavourable to the latter, could he believe that the world would fail to conclude that the commander in chief was dismissed because his conduct was disapproved ? But to shew that the system of attacking my hon. relation is still pursued as the only means of defending the Irish government, I will produce two articles which have been published in the Dublin journal. But first let me ask, will ministers, and gent. connected with Ireland, deny that the Dublin newspapers, particularly this newspaper, are under the influence of government ? Will they deny that the conductors of that journal would venture to insert paragraphs disagreeable to the castle ? It may not be the case, perhaps, that the Irish newspapers are so much under the control of government as the Paris journals are under that of the French government ; but will it be pretended that the Irish government does not influence the Dublin papers, and particularly that called "Faulkner's journal ?" No one will deny this, and the conclusion drawn from what I am about to read, I think is equally undeniable. Here Mr. Fox read a paragraph from the Dublin journal of the 14th Feb., respecting admiral Berkeley having given up his motion in consequence of what Mr. Yorke said respecting general Fox. It stated in most abusive terms, that blame existed somewhere, and that if ministers were not obliged to resist such motion from the inconvenience with which it would be attended the result would fully justify them, and prove unfavourable to general Fox. He then read a paragraph in the Dublin journal of the 18th Feb., again reflecting on gen. Fox, and contrasting his conduct with what Lord Cathcart's would have been, and stating the different consequences ; at the same time stating, that though the death of Lord Kilwarden, &c. would not have taken place, the country would have lost the benefit which had arisen from the disclosure of rebellion, and from

the example of the pure and admirable dispensations of criminal justice. Indeed two more scurrilous and abusive paragraphs, continued Mr. Fox cannot be conceived. When I see such paragraphs published in the journals of the castle what am I to conclude ? Had the first of these paragraphs been disagreeable to the castle, is it to be credited that the slightest notice of disapprobation would not have prevented the repetition ? It is impossible in fairness, then to deny, that the Irish government does endeavour to defend itself by attempting to blacken the character of the commander in chief. From this, however, two material inferences are to be drawn. The first is a personal one, and it is clear that the recalc of general Fox was intended to imply a charge of misconduct on that officer, and in this view the attack on my right hon. relation is pursued up to this moment. The next is of a public nature, and it is, that the Irish government are aware that their defence is utterly untenable, unless they are permitted to throw the blame which exists somewhere, on Gen. Fox. They cannot deny that things are not right, but they would fain have it thought that they are not wrong. But an hon. gent. (Mr. Dawson) thinks that he has a triumphant argument against the motion, because no Irish member came forward to make it. Having had that hon. gent. with me on the question of the union, it may perhaps be a good answer to him to say, that one of the objections to the union here was, that it would tend to increase the influence of the crown in this House, and then it was prophesied, that of the 100 Irish members not one would be found to bring forward any charge against ministers. The prophecy, in this instance, seems pretty nearly realized. But since no Irish member has thought proper to move the inquiry, we see that the Dublin journal with inferior authority, indeed, states that the subject deserves inquiry, and the only objection to it is the inconvenience it might occasion to ministers at this critical moment. Now, the call for inquiry even of the Dublin journal, is important in every way ; either as it speaks what is agreeable to the sense and feeling of a part of the people of Ireland ; or as it speaks the sense of the castle, which in the newspaper it influences, admits that blame lies somewhere. To discover and decide where that blame really does lie now remains for Parliament. The hon. baronet, who opened his motion with so much ability and good sense, asserts and offers to prove, the various facts. My hon.

friend who spoke lately (Gen. Tarleton) has likewise stated many important facts. But to these it is said by the right hon. gent., they are all hearsay. Why, to be sure, they are hearsay, and what other ground has Parliament to proceed upon in the first instance, but hearsay; and what else can we have but hearsay, unless the House will resolve to inquire? There has been some criticism employed by the right hon. gent. on the word "surprised," as applied to the Irish government on the 23d. After what had been admitted almost by every person who had spoke, I did not expect to hear any dispute as to this point. Surprise may not necessarily imply blame. The greatest generals have been surprised. If the Irish government had fairly said, we have had so many false alarms, so much false information, that in this instance we have been surprised; this defence, might, perhaps, have been admitted. But they were not "surprised!" I have always considered surprise to signify being taken unprepared. If then the Irish government had information at 3 o'clock, and were taken unprepared at 9 I must still think they were surprised, and they are the more inexcusable if they did receive information and did not act upon it. This circumstance renders it more disgraceful, more unseemly, to be taken unprepared. To be surprised may in such circumstances be a great crime. Indeed, to be surprised is *prima facie* evidence of neglect. If a ship is lost, a court of inquiry is held, because the rule is, that a ship ought not to be lost without an inquiry into the case, and this when there is not the slightest reason to suppose blame. But there is something *prima facie*, which demands examination. The fact of the government of a great country being surprised, as that of Ireland was on the 23d of July, is of itself a *prima facie* evidence of neglect as would fully justify inquiry. With respect to the precautions adopted, let us see what they were. It may not be amiss, however, to notice the extraordinary defence set up for the lord lieutenant against the government, so extraordinary that it is altogether inconsistent with common sense. It is said that communications were made by the lord lieutenant to General Fox, and a letter written on the 18th acquainting him of the explosion of the powder-mill or magazine on the 16th. The fact is, that general Fox had been absent on a military tour. He arrived in Dublin late on the 21st, so that he did not receive the letter and communicated papers till that day. But, in truth, what is it to

have communicated such intelligence without adding the view in which the matter appeared to them on the spot, and whose business it was to examine such matters. It is perfectly well known that to communicate a mass of papers without pointing out the mode in which the circumstances they state may or may not be founded, according to previous information or observation, is communicating just nothing at all, and is worse than no intelligence. Next day, the 22nd, the lord lieutenant wrote to General Fox, saying there was nothing new, and expressing a wish that the General would call at the lodge on Saturday upon his other business. Nothing was said or written to enable General Fox, who had been absent, to judge what importance was attached to the explosion of the 16th. Of what use, in God's name, was it to send such communication, unless the commander in chief was expected to do something on it? And had he any reason to suppose that the government expected he should do any thing? The information of Mr. Clarke on Thursday, though afterwards repeated on Friday should have been communicated to General Fox with the weight that belonged to it. But nothing was done that indicated that government attached importance to the information they had received, or expected the commander in chief to do anything in consequence of it. Is it then fair to say, that the commander in chief had the same information as lord Hardwicke? The latter had been more than two years in Ireland. He had an opportunity of observing the state and the sentiments of the people, and had 60,000*l.* a year to spend in secret service money, to procure intelligence. He was able, therefore, or ought to have been able, to discriminate information, and to distinguish true from false. The commander in chief had been in Ireland only about six weeks. He had been absent on a military tour, and had no secret service money to facilitate information, nor was it his business to attend to the detail and examination of its results. How, then, was Gen. Fox to know whether the information received was important, but from the impression it made on those in the habit of receiving and criticising it? When he saw that no information was sent to the lord mayor of the intended rising, that the lord lieutenant went to the Phoenix Park, unless indeed for the purpose of leaving it empty, and that the rebels should find nothing in it, how could he imagine that the information was of a serious nature? what else could he have concluded than that Lord Hardwicke

did not believe the intelligence received? The right hon. gent. has read a letter from the lord lieut. to Gen. Fox, written on the evening of Saturday. At first I thought that the letter must contain something which showed that the lord lieut. believed that a serious rising would take place? but in fact, it states nothing more than that the lord lieut. had received a communication from Col. Aylmer, and which neither the Col. himself, nor Lord Hardwicke seemed to attach much credit to. In fact, if the lord lieut. did believe that a rising was to take place, why did he leave the Castle, and go to the Phoenix Park? Surely, if there was danger, his presence at the seat of govt. would have given confidence to the loyal, and have inspired vigour into the operations of the civil and military power. Was the Phoenix Park his proper station if he believed that danger approached? But his courage and magnanimity induced him to quit the Castle! How! What courage, what magnanimity? If there was danger, his leaving the Castle and going to the Lodge was not courage, but either the grossest ignorance or the most culpable temerity. What merit could there be in personal courage that led him from a station where he was safe and useful, to a place where he could be of no service, and where if an attack had been made, he might have fallen into the hands of the rebels, without the merit of defending his post, and perishing in the defence of his country? The state of Dublin on that day presents a most lamentable picture of a city deserted by all the efficient members of its government; and if danger was apprehended, never was conduct so unaccountable. The lord lieut. quits the Castle, and retires to his villa! The commander in chief goes to Kilmainham! The lord mayor of Dublin has no information, and goes to his villa. The superintending magistrate Alderman Alexander, tells his constables to be in readiness, and goes out of town to his villa! What is to be inferred from this, but that nobody believed that any riot or rebellion would take place? Is it possible that all these persons could have acted so, had they been impressed with the belief that any serious rising was intended? Ministers have shown that they will not be behind hand with their predecessors in taxing our pockets, but they wish to tax our faith beyond all example. I scarce ever come down to this House, but I am called upon to believe something which it is impossible for any man of common sense to credit; and now ministers come and tell us to believe what the most superstitious Irish Roman Catholic bogtrotter could not digest. After

such a train of facts, how can any man affect to say, that the Irish govt. actually believed in the intelligence they had received? I come next to a very important point. It is confessed, that at the beginning of last year, the Irish govt. were of opinion, that it would be proper to suspend the Habeas Corpus, and to establish Martial Law. Ministers here would not accede to that system, being desirous of representing Ireland as tranquil, as they had described the peace as profound. That the power asked for by the Irish govt. and refused, was so readily granted after the 23d, must have convinced that govt. of the best mode of obtaining it. It was then that the ostensible illustration of the necessity became apparent. And when we hear the noble lord qualifying and objecting to the principle, that prevention is always best, it might afford some suspicion that the insurrection of the 23d, would not have been so very disagreeable, had it not been accompanied by the murder of Lord Kilwarden and Col. Browne. But although in the eye of the law one life is as good as another, it certainly is not so in the feelings of mankind; and it is true as the noble lord (Castlereagh) observed that the murder of Lord Kilwarden had given an additional interest to the melancholy affair of the 23rd. But since gentlemen argue so much of the good produced by the insurrection in disclosing the intentions of the disaffected, in weakening their cause, and in establishing the glory of the loyal administration of Ireland, how many deaths does this noble lord calculate as well compensated by so many advantages, and in what specific cases does he think that the principle of prevention is not the best? Such doctrines I must ever hold in the utmost horror. As was justly said the other night, on the subject of invasion, that every inch of Kent or Sussex is to be defended, so every man in Dublin, every house, every chamber is to be saved from destruction if the system of prevention can be applied. Such conclusions would be a disgrace to the policy of the worst governments, would disgrace Machiavel so much injured, if given as the result of the principles often so erroneously imputed to him. But, I hope I mistook the scope of the noble lord's argument, though I am sure I do not mistake his words. The defenders of the Irish govt. cannot agree about the proper name of the transaction of the 23d. Sometimes it is a "contemptible riot," at others, a dangerous rebellion. It is said, there could be no danger, for there were 4,000 regular troops in Dublin. That force, I have no doubt, would be able to suppress even a

formidable insurrection, but if an insignificant riot was expected on the 23d, why was not the commander in chief directed to hold troops in readiness at the call of the civil magistrates? And why were not the magistrates in attendance to give their sanction to the operation of the troops if necessary? If it was a "contemptible riot," why did ministers, upon such a ground, call for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus, and the introduction of Martial Law? If on the other hand, it was, as Lord Redesdale says, not 8 persons of the ringleaders, nor 80 rebels in all, but that persons came from all parts of Ireland to co-operate in a plan long meditated; are not ministers culpable in being ignorant of that state of the country? With respect to Lord Redesdale's letters, it has been said, that next to the indiscretion of publishing them, would be the indiscretion of discussing them. With all that genius which the Irish possess, (and I think they possess genius in a degree superior to other nations), with all the valour which they possess in an equal degree with the inhabitants of this country, with all the good qualities of every kind which belong to them, the people of Ireland have never been very famous for their discretion. It must no doubt, then, have been very gratifying to them, to find that a grave English chancellor sent over to them had been guilty of an indiscretion, to which, indeed, nothing could be second; for it was of that sort that nothing simile et secundum could exist. These letters are more than indiscreet. They must be infinitely mischievous if the author of them continues to fill his present station. It had been denied that Mr. Marsden had treated any one who came to give him information with want of attention; but I have heard, that in the case of a Mr. Finlay, something of this kind was complained of. I do not assert this to be the fact. But if an inquiry is granted, I pledge myself to shew, that it is impossible any man of sense can be of opinion that the lord lieut. of Ireland did believe that an insurrection great or small, would take place on the 23d of July, and that till within half an hour of the explosion, the Commander in Chief had no intelligence in what manner it was expected he should act. It was said by the noble lord very boldly, that there was a complete bar to justice in this affair; but he thought proper to qualify. This bar was the absence of Lord Hardwicke. Against such doctrine I must beg leave wholly to protest. Parliament ought to exert its control over the executive power, both in its near and its distant operations. If this were not to be the

case, what an argument against the union altogether! For this Parliament is unfit to legislate for a country, the executive administration of which it cannot control. It has been said too, that the hon. bart. who made the motion must know better what happens at Wolverhampton than in Dublin. Against this sort of language I must also enter my solemn protest. Though, doubtless, more connected with his immediate constituents, and more devoted to their particular service, every member of Parliament is member for the whole empire, for Dublin as well as for Hertfordshire and Yorkshire. Such doctrine as we have heard to-night would not have been endured formerly, and if it is suffered to prevail there must be an end of even the pretence of benefit which Ireland was to derive from a liberal protecting, dispassionate legislature. I am decidedly of opinion, that there is sufficient *prima facie* evidence of neglect in the Irish govt. to justify the inquiry; that the contradictory assertions of ministers respecting the state of Ireland; render it more necessary; and, I hope that the House, in such circumstances, notwithstanding their partiality to ministers, will feel that the question involves the credit of the whole government.

Mr. Dallas said, the only question before the House was, whether they would lay the foundation of an address to his Majesty to dismiss from his councils the persons alluded to, as being incapable to render his Majesty any service? He would consider the question as it put the House into a judicial capacity. He fully recognized that great duty and privilege of the House to inquire into the conduct of the executive government. But it was unbecoming the character of the House to institute an inquiry without a sufficient ground. It was not enough, in the present case, to shew after the event that something better might have been done on the 23d of July by the govt. in Ireland; but a strong presumption of culpable neglect must be shewn, and of sufficient magnitude to call for so solemn a proceeding as an inquiry by Parliament. He could not forbear to express his surprise at the time of bringing this motion before the House. If the arguments of the friends of the motion are conclusive, how do they justify their neglect in delaying this great and necessary inquiry? The House, if those arguments be good, is more culpable than the government of Ireland. Of the hon. gent. opposite to him (Mr. Fox), it may be truly said, that no man has a more acute understanding. Yet he with all the motives arising from his regard

for his near relation, with all his attachment to the privileges of the House and his attention to his own duty, could not find, in all the time that has elapsed, matter to charge the govt. of Ireland with criminal neglect; for if he had, the hon. gent. would have been induced by those motives to bring the question himself before the House. Having made these preliminary observations, he should inquire whether there was any proof of criminal negligence in the govt. of Ireland on the 23d of July; and this included the consideration of the kind of intelligence they had of the designs of the rebels, and the question, whether on such information as they had, they made preparations adequate to the danger as that evidence presented it to them. It was material to the complete view of this matter, to consider what the character of the insurrection was. Gentlemen were condemned for calling this a "contemptible riot." What, he says, is that contemptible, whose object is to separate Ireland from England? No! not as to its object, but contemptible it may be in its means; and such it appeared to be as far as Dublin was concerned. The difficulty of obtaining information that is sufficiently accurate, in an affair to which few were privy, and in which the zeal of the parties would enjoin secrecy, was not to be overlooked. With all this, what is the degree of information obtained? On the 23d the lord lieutenant and the commander in chief came to the Castle between 3 and 4 o'clock, and the necessary orders were issued for the security of the city of Dublin. A military council was held at 9 o'clock, and the different posts were strengthened. Thus it appeared that no negligence had taken place on the part of govt. The learned gent. here went through the history of the information received by the Irish govt., as it had been detailed by Mr. Yorke. He then said he would take Mr. Fox's acceptance of the word surprised, as applied to the government, viz., whatever they knew, they were not prepared; and would examine the state of the preparations. After which he went into the history of the preparations of the govt. as detailed by Mr. Yorke. He contended chiefly, from this that the lord lieutenant had done all his office required; and that the commander in chief ought to have put every thing under his command, in a proper train of preparation. He said, if surprise meant ignorance, not of the general designs and intentions of the rebels, but of the individual persons concerned, the particular plan, and the moment of the attempt, then he would acknowledge the charge. But these the govt. had not the

means of knowing. The hon. gent. (Mr. Fox) had argued against himself; for, if the lord lieutenant did not credit the information he received, or thought it doubtful, (which that gent. had contended) then his preparations were, indeed, great. For his part, he thought, the govt. in Ireland had gained all the intelligence their means afforded, and made every preparation necessary on that information. He could not, therefore, conscientiously agree to put them on their trial. It would be injustice to them; it would be contrary to the true object of the discretion placed in Parliament. Inquiries into the conduct of the executive government ought never to be instituted, but on the most grave and important reasons. Upon an attentive consideration of the whole transaction, he was perfectly convinced that no blame was imputable to the civil or military government, and should conscientiously vote against the present motion.

Dr. Lawrence said, the learned gentleman had taken up the question as a counsel for a person accused, who keeps all the arguments against him out of sight. The House could only have general evidence to induce them to go into the inquiry. All the documents that would be evidence, were in the possession of the other side, and his hon. friends could not produce them. The learned gent. considered the House as a Grand Jury; and as such, he contended, they had sufficient evidence to grant the inquiry. He had very much at heart the preservation of that power in the House of inquiring into the acts of the executive govt., and those of its servants. For this reason, he had voted against the administration he had generally supported, in the case of Admiral Colpoys, because the proper evidence was not before the House. He deprecated the practice that had lately so entirely obtained, of denying evidence to the House. He maintained, that no time had been lost by those who professed themselves friends to the inquiry. The question had been brought forward soon after the 23d of July, but was given up at the instance of ministers, who thought the advanced state of the session precluded the proper means of information. Since that period, the conduct of the govt. of Ireland had been animadverted upon, by an hon. member (Mr. Fox) during the discussion of the army estimates. Another hon. member, a relation of the gallant officer who commanded in Ireland had also given notice of a motion; and the worthy baronet who then felt it his duty to take it up, had certainly lost no time in bringing the question forward. As the darkness of the night

in which the insurrection broke out had been particularly mentioned, he should just observe, notwithstanding the darkness was represented to be so great as to prevent a person from seeing his hand before him, that a man had been hanged upon the sole evidence of one, who deposed that he had distinctly seen him from a two-pair of stairs window.—Whether any blame could attach to any person or not, or on whomsoever it might fall, he hoped for the honour of the country, an inquiry would be granted; and he should vote as conscientiously as his learned friend when he gave his vote for the motion.

The *Attorney General* could not too strongly call the attention of the House to the necessity of having a grave case made out *primâ facie* before any inquiry could be instituted. The hon. gent. opposite to him (Mr. Fox) had called the letters and papers referred to, in justification of the govt. of Ireland, garbled intelligence; but he felt no difficulty in saying, that if there ever was an instance in which good and satisfactory documents were produced, that instance was the present case. For his own part he was ready to oppose the motion: not from the arguments and statements which those documents supplied him with, but from the grounds advanced by the hon. baronet himself, who had opened the discussion; and if ever the govt. had been surprised, it did not follow that they were, on that account to be accused of negligence and the want of vigilance and precaution. When gentlemen talked of preventive measures, they did not seem to consider that although patrols of horse and foot might have secured the tranquillity of the city of Dublin, by doing constant duty every night, yet such measures of prevention would have left the rebellion lurking in the heart of the city. If as the fact was, the rebellion had not lasted for a single hour, what grounds were there he would ask, for forming any correct opinion of its magnitude? Yet enough had, undoubtedly been disclosed, to shew the disposition of the disaffected, their connexion with persons who had arrived from France, and the nature of their plans. Was it then going too far to arm, by the adoption of subsequent measures, government with powers which were calculated to guard against and counteract any new insurrections after the explosion of the last? If the necessary consequences of the motion were to be the removal of the lord lieut., and of officers entrusted with important military commands those consequences alone would be a sufficient argument against its being entertain-

ed, as no such proceeding ought to take place, unless a grave case were previously made out.—With respect to the correspondence which had been the subject of an hon. gentleman's animadversions, it was undeniable that Lord Redesdale had not published his letters, and the mischief, if indeed any had been produced, was caused by the publication of the correspondence. It was rather extraordinary and hard, that the subject of that correspondence should be mingled with the conduct of government; for Lord Redesdale in communicating his sentiments to the noble lord, on whom he was conferring the right of exercising the duties of a magistrate was not guilty of any impropriety in suggesting what he conceived might be useful to the noble lord in the discharge of the duties of his new office. The *Attorney General* concluded with declaring, that until a grave and material case was satisfactorily made out, the House could not with consistency agree to the proposed inquiry.

Lord *De Blaquiere* rose at about 2 o'clock in the morning. He said, that before he went into the question, he would crave the indulgence of the House for a moment, to make a short observation on what had fallen from an hon. friend of his (Mr. Dawson).—It was with sorrow and pain he had heard the hon. gent. express any jealousy upon the interference of English members in the concerns of Ireland. Such a proceeding ought to be considered not as an evil, but a benefit arising out of the union of the two kingdoms as the temperate and dispassionate interference of unprejudiced men would be ever attended with the most solid advantages to that country. He said, if it had been his good fortune to have been noticed at an earlier hour, he should have endeavoured to have made some reply to the speech delivered by the noble lord at the beginning of the debate, but those items which he meant to have questioned were now gone by, leaving only one general impression upon his mind, that the noble lord had fallen into that error which the wisest logicians have often experienced; namely, that he had in fact proved too much. The noble lord had laid it down and asserted, that the conduct of the Irish government on the 23d of July was better than well—whereas he (lord De Blaquiere) thought that the government of Ireland on that day was worse, infinitely worse, than bad!—His noble friend and he, were, therefore, completely at issue upon the point, and a war of assertion was to be continued as it had begun, But suffer me, said Lord De Blaquiere, to call the attention of the House

to a distinction which may not be altogether undeserving of notice. God forbid! I should have the presumption to say, that any thing coming from my mouth deserved a better attention than that which any other man has uttered, but when it shall be remembered that I desire to consign to a committee for the investigation of truth, every thing which I shall advance, and that those on the other side, who equally and boldly make their assertions, shrink from the investigation which I court, the House will, I am confident, make the distinction.—Upon the subject of the present discussion look, said his lordship, a little back and see if all these disasters had not arisen more from the mismanagement of government than from any other cause. View that fatal system of not alarming the people, that wretched admixture of fear and fright, whose operation upon the minds of men led to doing that which was worse than wrong; namely, to the doing of nothing at all; a system which had brought this country to its ruin, if its feelings had not been roused by the persevering spirit, and sense of the right hon. gent. opposite (Mr. Windham), who had awakened the people to a sense of their danger, without terrifying their minds or exciting their fears; and which had led to those exertions that have put the country into a situation, far beyond the apprehension of danger.—In a hapless hour, however, the fatal, the favourite, but wretched system was like a pestilential disease wafted over to Ireland, and to this he did really believe was to be principally ascribed all the evils which have followed.—The House would please to remember (they could not forget it) that some weeks previous to that fatal day, he had in that very place where he then stood, spoken his belief of the forthcoming mischief. He was treated with attention by the House, but his Majesty's ministers and their friends heard him with disdain.—The country was then, as he feared many parts of it would be found now, in that state of silent, but perceptible stir, which has preceded every great explosion, and which has been the constant harbinger of deadly mischief.—All is tranquillity, said the friends of the administration—all is quiet, quiet, Mr. Speaker, said his lordship; so is gun-powder, if you will let it alone.

In respect to the transaction to which the attention of the House had been called by the hon. baronet, he would be careful how he gave offence by his words: he would be afraid to call it a rebellion, and with shyness would glance even at

an insurrection—most gentlemen admitted there had been a riot or a row, many more acknowledged there had been a dispute; but that there had been a difference of opinion every body admitted, upon the grounds of the impossibility of living under the austere control of the King upon the throne, and the tyrannic system of the English constitution, compared with the mild and benignant government of the Chief Consul of France.—In this controversy, as is often the case, from words they came to blows, and he believed it was known, that in about a quarter of an hour some five and twenty or thirty men were laid dead upon their backs. To the honour of government, however, be it said, they had yet made no attempt to prove that any one of these gentlemen had made away with themselves.—The hanging which succeeded carried off many more, not more, he begged to observe, than the injured laws and justice of the country required; but the thing went on merrily every day whilst he was on the spot, and he heard it observed, comically enough to be sure (and in repeating which he hoped he should give offence to no gentleman in that House) “that every man had been hanged, except those who deserved it.—It was too late in the night to enter minutely into the several items of the transaction. Enough had already been said. On the 16th of July, the rebel magazine in Patrick Street blew up; and it appeared by the evidence of Flemming on Emmett's trial, that all the remaining ammunition, ball cartridges to the amount of 30,000 arms, &c. were removed in the middle of the day of the 17th from this rebel magazine to the rebel depot in Marshall Lane.—That at this depot in Marshall Lane, it appears on the trials, that from 10 to 30 persons were constantly employed, not in the manufacturing of minikin pins or pocket pistols, but in the construction of some of the most formidable and cumbersome implements of war.—Beams from 12 to 20 feet in length, ingeniously contrived, and holding from 20 to 25 pikes each; other blocks of timber of the same bulk loaded with combustibles, so massive and unwieldy, that less than 10 men could not easily move them.—Then how could the House credit, as it had been asserted, that 8 men only were employed in the work. All this had been quietly going on for some weeks previous to the rebellion, and within a few hundred yards of the Castle gate, and this being admitted, (for it cannot be denied), *how* is it we are called upon unblushingly to extol the vigilance and exertions of the government of Ireland? If

the Lord Lieutenant had the power sufficient to crush this insurrection in the bud, which ne (Lord de Blaquiere) always shrewdly suspected he had not, why was it not exerted? If the Lord Lieutenant had those powers and did not exert them, he was criminally to blame; but if, instead of being armed with those powers, so indispensable for the executive government in a disturbed country) it should appear, and he thought he had picked up as much in the course of the debate, that Lord Hardwicke was not only unarmed with those powers, but that he had actually applied for them to his Majesty's ministers in England, and had been refused; sure, said he, my Lord Hardwicke can be no longer to blame; the blame, the neglect, the responsibility, no longer attaches upon him, it reverts with accumulated weight upon the shoulders of the right hon. gent. who sits in the next bench—upon him and those with whom he has advised.—The noble Lord who said that 3,000 pikes only were taken, had been misinformed, for that noble lord, he knew, was utterly incapable of giving the fiat of his word to any thing which he did not believe to be true; but the fact was, that 13,000 pikes were taken on the 23d of July, and the succeeding day. His authority was from one of the persons appointed by government to collect them.—To go into the military disquisition of the business, was at that hour too late; and, moreover, had been sufficiently explained by an hon. gent. who had gone before him; but, that some thousand strangers had come into the town in the night between the 22d and 23d of July, every body knew. The government had express information of it, not from ordinary and ill-paid spies, but from some of the most respectable gentry of the country; and that their object was to cut the throat of every loyal man. These were facts, said his lordship, for the truth of which I desire to be brought to the tribunal of truth for enquiry; that is, the committee moved for by the hon. baronet. He wished for the sake of the country in which he had so long lived, and for the honour of the government under which he had so long served, that he might be put in the wrong; but, he supplicated, he implored the House, to satisfy the people of that neglected country, and let them know, whether all the calamities they had so recently endured, were brought upon them by the visitation of God for their sins; or, whether they owed these disasters to the misconduct of men who were no more than themselves?—That an inquiry ought to be induced, if argument could prove any thing, had already been proved.—The hon. general

who had been alluded to, did not go to Ireland to make a character; and it was the bounden duty of the House, to see that he did not loose a character without a cause. The friends of that gallant officer, he was sure would vote for the inquiry; the hon. member his kinsman, had signified his intention so to do; it was honourable for both. He trusted the friends of Lord Hardwicke would do the same, and to push the climax one step further, he thought, the right hon. gent. the Chancellor of the English Exchequer ought to do so likewise; as he should not scruple to assert, that, in the vulgar consideration of this business, his name had been continually mentioned; the government of Ireland with its eyes open, and on the spot, could not have acted the part they did, but for the express control of the English cabinet.—Upon the score of Lord Hardwicke, he begged the House would indulge him with a word. He considered Lord Hardwicke as a high bred nobleman, of fine manners, and engaging address; that for probity and integrity, he had never been surpassed; and that in his breast the God of nature had planted a heart as pure and immaculate, as ever rested in the bosom of man; but this was not the subject then under consideration. He thanked the House for the condescending attention they had been pleased to shew him; he should of course vote for the committee.

Mr. *Windham* thought, that the House was much indebted to the noble Lord who spoke last, not only for the important facts which he had furnished and the useful reflections with which he had accompanied them, but for the pleasantry he had introduced, and which, besides being very refreshing after so long a debate, was, perhaps, the most forcible way of treating the question. There were some things so extravagant in their own nature, that nothing but ridicule could reach them:

"Safe from the bar, the pulpit, and the throne,
"But touch'd and shamed by ridicule alone."

the person undertaking to describe them was forced to have recourse to ridicule, from utter despair of doing justice to them by any direct or grave statement. Of this sort were the greater part of the allegations used on the present occasion in defence of the Irish government.—Before, however, he touched upon these, he must say a word upon the right of touching upon them, which seemed to be called in question, or, rather to be wholly set aside, by the doctrines of an hon. gent. who had spoke early. It had been said, that to make inquiry into

abuses in Ireland, and to employ the result of such inquiries as the means of attacking ministers was to make a use of Ireland, which must be considered as disrespectful to that country. But, if this was so, it must be equally disrespectful to England, to charge upon ministers any abuses which might be found in England: and thus the government must be completely protected against a charge for abuses committed anywhere. If Ireland alone were to be included in the rule, the effect must be to make Ireland a sort of repository and sanctuary for abuses, into which parliamentary control and inquiry "runneth not,"—a privilege which he did not conceive would be very honourable to her, or such as the hon. gent. alluded to would wish to claim in her behalf. He was in another view concerned at those opinions, inasmuch as they tended to draw distinctions between the two countries, which the union must be considered as having done away. There could, in reality, be no more distinction between the two countries than between any two counties of Great Britain. Whether any one had opposed the union, as he believed was the case of the hon. gent., or whether they had supported it, as was *his* case, (though, possibly, it might not have been *his* case, had he foreseen all that had happened, or rather, all that had not happened but had been wished, from that measure, and by which the objections to it, as well on the part of Ireland, as of England, might in his mind have been overcome); whatever previous opinions and feelings might have been entertained by any one, all persons must now agree in endeavouring to render its effects as salutary and complete as possible.—Assuming, then, what he concluded was not seriously denied, the right of the House to examine the question before them, one of the facts that first presented itself was the length of time, that the hon. gentlemen opposite to him had required, before they could make up their minds, whether they chose to be negligent or ignorant; whether they would be bulls or bears in the transaction; whether they wished to pass for persons, who had not foreseen the danger, or who had neglected to provide against it. They did not seem perfectly to have made their election even to that moment. One of the difficulties of arguing the question against them, and one of the means which they had of escape, was, that you could never tell on what ground to take them. Surprise, indeed, they had at length disclaimed. But then, the evils that had happened, or were upon the point of happening

the near seizure of the Castle, the murder of the Lord Chief Justice, the possible and not unlikely possession of the city for some time by the rebels, were said not to be the effect of negligence: no; it was a deep design, now first disclosed, but even now not distinctly asserted, to avoid the use of repellants, to let the disease get to a head, in order that they might make a more effectual cure of it. He was ready to confess that this was the only intelligible solution of their conduct; though he might be allowed to call in question the truth of it, because in fact it had, as yet, only been thrown out, without any assertion being made that the case was positively so. He could not, however, allow that the justification was a very good one, though he admitted that it was the only one that could by any possibility tally with the assertions that the Irish government was not taken by surprise, and yet not guilty of any negligence. The only possible third course was, that, seeing the danger, they chose, as was now hinted, to let it come on, in order that they might defeat it in the end with more effect and advantage. The objection to this course, supposing the fact to be as stated, was, that it was more proper for the case of a foreign enemy, than for a domestic faction. In the case of a foreign enemy it might be indifferent how many were destroyed; or it might be desirable to destroy as many as possible; but the feeling could hardly be the same on the part of a government with respect to a domestic faction, that is to say with respect to its own subjects. Prevention there seemed to be a duty more strongly called for than punishment.—The rebellion had been called a "contemptible riot," and names of great reproach and contempt given to all concerned in it. But it must be recollected, that names of that description were equally applicable to those concerned in the rebellion of 1798, which yet was not a contemptible riot. He could not moreover but think, that those who described their antagonists in these terms did not very well consider how such reflections recoiled upon themselves. They should parody the celebrated answer given by the Duke of Marlborough to Marshal Tallard. If the rioters were contemptible, what were those who were near being beaten by them?—That people flocked in upon the occasion from all the adjoining counties, and that the seeds of the insurrection were to be found distributed through three-fourths of the people of Ireland—these latter facts they had upon the authority of the highest legal officer in Ireland (Lord Redesdale), a testimony, that

in every view was a matter of no light consideration. He should not talk here of the imprudence of these letters, nor upon the endeavour of removing the blame from the writer to those who had been instrumental in the publication. The letters could not have been published, if they had never been written; and as to the right of publication, without discussing that question too nicely, or professing to have formed any decided opinion upon it, it did not immediately appear how a man was restrained on any principle of engagement or good faith in respect to a transaction, to which his consent had never been asked. It was by no act of a man's own that he received a letter; there could be no engagement, therefore, entered into, that he should not communicate that letter. What security even had he, that the writer had not previously communicated the letter, or might not at any time do so to others? And, without professing to know the fact, he (Mr. Windham) should be glad to learn, whether those letters had not been seen by friends of the noble writer's, perhaps, by his Majesty's ministers, before the time, when copies had got abroad from the hands of Lord Fingall. But even if these letters to Lord Fingall were to be considered as private, or could be made so by the mere act of the writer, and that the person receiving them was in consequence debarred the privilege of showing them to those whom they immediately concerned, the same interpretation could not well be extended to those which passed with Dr. Coppinger, the nature of which, any more than the situation of the parties, did not seem to imply any thing particularly confidential. These latter, however, were perhaps the most objectionable of all. In the former there was only the infinite absurdity and indiscretion of a correspondence, which was to offend, and prove to be rebels, whether they would or no, three-fourths of the population of Ireland, and to exhibit a picture, not indeed quite so extravagant as that which one of our poets ascribed to certain passages in another,

"Where God the Father turns a school divine."

but where as great an indecorum was found as human affairs could well admit; namely, where a chancellor appeared in that character, and for the purpose of present oppression and persecution, was raking up all the exploded controversies of more than two centuries ago. This was bad enough in theology, and still worse in politics. The doctrines were as false as the promulgation

of them was injudicious and dangerous. But in the other case, there were circumstances leading to more fatal impressions of the character of the person concerned, than those even which could be derived from the strange perversion and singular imprudence manifested in the former correspondence. A man who could write and think of the case of father O'Neil as is done in the letters to Dr. Coppinger, must be considered as having lost for the moment all legal ideas and feeling. What could be thought of a person in the situation of the noble lord, the first law officer of the country, the great source of justice and equity, who instead of being shocked at the horrors of that case,—the illegality of it as well as the cruelty,—could find nothing to excite his indignation in the first instance, but the audacity of the sufferer, who had dared to complain? Was he prepared to say, that the whole statement was false; that the whole narrative was fictitious; that there were no scourgings, no transportation, no forged testimonies, no decisions of two successive governments, pronouncing either the party to be innocent, or the proceedings against him to have been illegal, or the evidence insufficient? If he was not prepared to say this, if it was impossible that he should be so, if the nature of the transaction and the means of information did not admit the possibility of proof such as could counteract the presumption arising from the facts above stated, or in the supposition either of guilt or innocence, reconcile the proceedings to any idea of justice, how was it to be borne, that a person standing in the situation of the noble lord, should have passed over all these enormities, and have discovered no ground of complaint, but against the person who had presumed to recite them?

Mr. *Hawthorne* spoke to order, and observed, that the correspondence alluded to by the right hon. gent. had no connexion with the question before the House.

Mr. *Windham* contended that he was strictly in order, as the question of martial law, which was the consequence of the 23d of July, naturally led to the consideration of the opinions of the noble and learned lord, who, from his high situation, was presumed to take a chief part in the administration of public affairs, and who, at the time of passing the law in question, was expressly stated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer as a security that no improper use would be made of it.

Mr. *Alexander* spoke to order, and trusted the right hon. gent. would see the impropriety of putting the noble lord, as it were, on his trial, when the motion related

solely to the insurrection of the 23rd of July.

Mr. *Fox* maintained that the right hon. gent. was in order.—A general cry of chair! chair! prevailing,

The *Speaker* declared, that he did not see the connection between the correspondence alluded to and the question; but as the House had suffered the subject to be introduced and commented upon, other gentlemen might be allowed the same indulgence. Much would, however, depend upon the manner in which it might be treated.

Mr. *Windham* then resumed his speech, and having recapitulated some of his former statements, he concluded with observing, that he could not conceive a graver case, or one which pressed itself more strongly for inquiry on the judgment of the House.

Mr. *Tierney* said, that he could not but blame the right hon. gent. (Mr. *Windham*), who was formerly one of the most eager opponents to all inquiry, but who was now its most zealous champion. He knew that there were occasions where sentiments might be changed, without any abandonment of principle. Some gentlemen might smile, but his conduct, he trusted, was, and ever had been such, as to meet and defy every inquiry. He proceeded to remark, that the gentlemen on the other side had shewn little decorum in their change of opinion, and was surprised that those who had formerly sanctioned a system of severity in Ireland, should now express so great anxiety for the people of that country. It had been admitted, that no imputation was thrown on the hon. general alluded to, and there were certainly no circumstances in the conduct of the Irish govt. which could be supposed to render the motion necessary. There seemed to be no complaint against the Irish govt., but that they had succeeded in tracing out treason in all its ramifications, and the only objection he should have expected from the right hon. gent. (Mr. *Windham*) was, that the traitors had been punished by a vigour within, rather than a vigour beyond the law.—

The present motion appeared to him to be brought forward, for the purpose of bringing those together, whom it was difficult to reconcile, and the circumstance reminded him of the story of the goose, the fox, and the bag of corn. The principal merit of the present motion, was, that it contrived to unite all parties in a common vote; gentlemen who could agree on no two subjects were thus made to vote all one way, and carry on appearances of unanimity against ministers more specious than real. It was

like the contrivances sought by parents who had agreed on a match how to bring the young people together. Some did it by a ball, some by a water party, and some by one way, and some by another; but all contrived to keep forward a matter very distinct from the apparent and avowed object. The late insurrection had not that importance which gentlemen were inclined to attach to it. It was a petty tumult, which accident had made of greater consequence than it otherwise would probably have been. He justified the vigilance of the Irish govt., and again maintained his own consistency. He had formerly voted for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and therefore, was justified even on that ground in doing so now. Upon, the whole, he thought that no ground was made out to justify farther inquiry; the government of Ireland appeared to have taken every precaution necessary, and actually suppressed the rebellion in a few hours.

Mr. *Fox*, in explanation, said, that the paragraph in *Faulkner's Journal* was alluded to, not with a view of detracting from that paper, but to ascertain the character of those who might be considered as the paymasters of that Journal.

Mr. *Grey*, at the late hour to which the debate had been protracted, promised not to detain the House long. The right hon. gent. (Mr. *Tierney*) who had just sat down, had, it seems, brought forward a charge of inconsistency against a right hon. gent. (Mr. *Windham*). He would leave the right hon. gent. to defend himself from the charge; but must be allowed to express his opinion that such a charge came with singular propriety from the mouth of a gent., who was a perfect model of consistency! He had also read the right hon. gent. (Mr. *Windham*) a lecture on decorum, as to the manner of changing opinions. Perhaps, he thought, it was quite decorous in members to change over from the opposition side of the House; but utterly inconsistent with decorum to relinquish the sweets of office. The right hon. gent. had challenged any person to prove one act of inconsistency in his conduct, and had produced one solitary instance, in which, formerly he had voted for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. He (Mr. *Tierney*), on that occasion, had thought the arguments used justified the vote, but certain he was, that afterwards he had expressly voted against the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, notwithstanding the rebellion of that day was not as that of the present is now described by the

right hon. gent., a "petty tumult," but a great and serious insurrection against the govt., aided by an enemy's force. Yet now he felt it no inconsistency to vote as he had done, for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and the introduction of Martial Law, on the ground of the danger arising from that "petty tumult," which appeared so insignificant in his eyes.—Mr. Grey then entered into a recapitulation of the conduct of the govt. of Ireland relative to the transactions of the 23rd of July, and contended that a stronger and more sufficient ground of inquiry into public measures was never made out. He should, therefore, give his hearty assent to the motion.

Mr. Tierney said, in explanation, that the insurrection was of little consequence, independent of the murder of Lord Kilwarden, which was accidental.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* perfectly concurred with his right hon. friend (Mr. Tierney), that the right hon. gent. (Mr. Windham) had changed the opinions he had entertained for the last ten years. He contended, that with respect to the disposition of some portion of the people to insurrection, the government of Ireland was by no means unapprised; on the contrary, that they were fully aware that the torch of rebellion kindled in 1798, was by no means totally extinguished, though with respect to the general disposition of the country, they were confident of a disposition to tranquillity and loyalty; and that, although the govt. of Ireland, subsequent to the peace, did not call for the renewal of those acts as indispensably necessary under the general disposition of the country, yet they suggested that the revival would be expedient in a partial degree, as placing in the hands of govt. a power to repress any occasional symptoms of an insurrectionary tendency; and he repeated, that the murder of Lord Kilwarden and of Col. Brown, were the only prominent characteristics of the outrage which burst forth, that could be viewed as of state importance, however lamentable the loss of many other valuable lives on that melancholy occasion. But that any blame was attempted to be imputed to the gallant officer in question, he utterly denied. He would ask the members of the House of Commons, whether they could put their hands upon their hearts, and think they were doing their duty in agreeing to this motion.

General Tarleton remarked, that the soldiers in Ireland were so dispersed in the barracks, that 16 men constituted the main body of one regiment, the 64th. He could have

collected many more facts while in Ireland, but thought those produced sufficient for the purpose he had mentioned.

Mr. Calcraft referred Mr. Tierney to his own political life for instances of inconsistency. As to torture, or at least what he formerly called torture, the hon. and right hon. gentlemen now sitting near him were the most forward in justifying its establishment and practice. If the facts already before the House, and of public notoriety; namely, the murder of the lord chief justice, the murder of 16 citizens of Dublin, and other enormities were not adequate grounds of further inquiry, such grounds could never be obtained.

Mr. Dent rose amidst a strong call for the question, and replied to that part of Mr. Tierney's speech which referred to what he called party management in bringing forward this question. He was for an examination into the conduct of government with respect to Ireland, and would support the motion for inquiry, which, in other instances, he observed, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had always affected to coërt.

Colonel Hutchinson felt it necessary, even late as the hour was, to offer a few observations upon this subject; because, as he certainly meant to give a vote upon this question, he wished to assign his reasons for that vote. If the question of this night was meant to imply any censure upon the conduct of Lord Hardwicke, it certainly should not have his assent; because the conduct of that noble lord had his most hearty approbation. If it was meant to convey any censure upon the government of both countries, as with respect to the particular occasion, he should feel equally averse to vote for it, convinced, as he was, that blame ought not to attach; but, if it was directed to an inquiry into the conduct of his Majesty's ministers, for not having directed their investigations to the state of Ireland, with a view to remove the cause of discontent, and thereby prevent those lamentable ebullitions of popular discontent, which unhappily agitated the country, it should have his most hearty concurrence, because he had repeatedly endeavoured to impress upon his Majesty's ministers the necessity of such an investigation, but without effect; and because he thought their resistance to such inquiry most extremely culpable. In addition to this conduct he had to arraign that of a noble lord (Redesdale) at the head of the law department of Ireland, in the promulgation of those letters which had appeared in the correspondence between him

and a respectable nobleman in that country, and in which the most wanton and unfounded insult was directed against three-fourths of his Majesty's subjects in that country by the unjust impeachment of their loyalty, which was to his knowledge, and from everything which had been manifested in their conduct, most unwarranted and unjustifiable.

Sir John Wrottesley said he would take up the time of the House but for a few moments, by way of reply. He left his personal motives to be judged of by the House, from a knowledge of his character. It was in vain to make professions. He knew gentlemen who said they took places from patriotic motives, but others were not satisfied of that fact, and thought they caught at them from low and mercenary motives. His object was certainly to implicate the conduct of both governments, relative to the transaction of the 23d July. In order to show that Gen. Fox was not duly apprized of the approaching rebellion, and that the Irish govt. were taken by surprise, he read an extract from a letter to Gen. Fox, sent at seven o'clock, 23d July signed 'A. Marsden.' Was it, he asked, justifiable to protect and nourish such a man, and discharge, almost at the same moment, the gallant and meritorious officer whose conduct had been brought into question? Surely this was too weak. After recapitulating several other points of his former arguments, and shewing the insufficiency of the observations by which they were opposed, he concluded, by professing his adherence to the motion he had made. The Attorney General and Mr. Fox said a few words in explanation. After which the question was put, and on a division the numbers were

For the motion.... 82

Against it. 178

Majority 96

Adjourned at half past 4 on Thursday morning.

List of the Minority.

Adair, R.	Johnstone, G.
Baker, J.	Kensington, Lord
Bankes, H.	Laurence, F.
Barclay, G.	Latouche, R.
Barclay, Sir R.	Latouche, J.
Barlow, F. W.	Lawley, Sir R.
Berkeley, Hon. G. C.	Madocks, W. A.
Binning, Lord	Mildmay, Sir H. P.St. J.
Bouverie, Hon. E.	Milner, Sir W. M.
Brooke, Lord	Moore, G. P.
Burdett, Sir F.	Moore, P.
	Morpeth, Viscount

Calcraft, J.	Morris, E.
Canning, Rt. Hon. G.	North, D.
Cartwright, W. R.	Northey W.
Cavendish, Lord G.	Ord, W.
Coombe, H. C.	Osborne, J.
Cooke, B.	Ossulston, Lord
Courtenay, J.	Petty, Lord H.
Craufurd, R.	Ponsonby, Rt. Hn.W.B.
Crevey, T.	Porchester, Lord
De Blaquiere, Lord	Poyntz, W. S.
Dent, J.	Raine, J.
Dickenson, W. jun.	Russell, Lord W.
Dillon, Hon. H. A.	St. John, Hon. St. A.
Dundas, hn. C. L.	Scudamore, J.
Dundas, Hon. G. H. L.	Shakespeare, A.
Elford, Sir W.	Spencer, Lord R.
Elliot, W.	Stanley, Lord
Ellis, C. R.	Sturges, W.
Fitzpatrick, Rt. Hon. R.	Temple, Earl
Folkestone, Lord Visct.	Townsend, Lord J.
Fox, Hon. C. J.	Walpole, Hon. G.
Francis, P.	Ward, R.
Gower, Lord G. L.	Ward, R.
Graham, J.	Whitbread, S.
Grenville, Rt. Hon. T.	Wilberforce, W.
Grey, Hon. C.	Windham, Rt. Hon.
Hamilton, Lord A.	Wynne, C. W. W.
Hippesley, Sir J. C.	Wynne, Sir W. W.
Holland, H. jun.	

Wrottesley, Sir John } TELLERS.
Tarleton, General }

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, March 8.

The various bills before the House were forwarded in their respective stages; among these, the Marine Mutiny Bill, and the Scotch Bankrupt Law Bill, the commitments of which had been severally negatived, were read a third time and passed. Some private business was then disposed of; and their lordships, after waiting some time in expectation of a communication from the House of Commons, adjourned till to-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, March 8.

[MINUTES.] Sir J. W. Anderson presented the Stratford-le-Bow Poor Rates Bill, which was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time. Mr. Forster moved that the committee on Irish Currency should have leave to sit notwithstanding any adjournment of the House. Ordered.—The Marine Society Fishing Company Bill was ordered to be read a second time on Tuesday fortnight. Mr. Corry presented a petition from the Commissioners of the police in Dublin, for leave to present another petition praying for a continuance of the duties for the support of the said police. After some observations of the Speaker relative to the orders

of the House, and Mr. Corry having stated that the petitioners did not learn until the period of presenting private petitions had passed, that the duties for the support of the police were not to be included in the schedule before the House, the petition was brought up, and leave given to present the main petition, which was referred to a committee.—Mr. Alexander brought up the report of the Irish Holy Orders Bill, which was read and agreed to, and the Bill ordered to be read a third time to-morrow.—A message from the Lords informed the House that their Lordships had agreed to the Scotch Creditors' Bill, and the Royal Marine Mutiny Bill without any amendment.—The Hides and Skins Bill was read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.—Mr. Corry brought up the Irish Malt Duty Bill, which was read a first time. There was a provision in the Bill, he said, for imposing a countervailing duty on malt imported into Ireland. By an order of council, or by an order of the lord lieutenant of Ireland, corn and grain might be permitted to be imported into Ireland from this country, but the law in this respect did not extend to malt. As the corn trade between the two countries was likely to come under consideration during the present session, it was in that case intended to propose to extend the powers of the council with respect to allowing importation to malt. A countervailing duty would then be necessary, and therefore a provision for that purpose was made in the present bill. The bill was ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.—On the order of the day being read for the House to resolve itself into a committee on the Irish Duties Bill, Mr. Corry said, that from the great length of the schedule the persons employed had not been able to get it ready, and he therefore moved to postpone the committee till to-morrow. Ordered.—The committee on the Irish Countervailing Duties Bill was likewise deferred till to-morrow.—Mr. Bond laid before the House by his Majesty's command, a copy of orders in council permitting certain goods imported from America, in neutral ships, to be admitted to entry. Ordered to lie on the table.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, March 9.

[HIS MAJESTY'S INDISPOSITION.]—Shortly after the meeting took place, and previously to the temporary adjournment of the House, for the purpose of affording time to the lords commissioners to robe,

Earl Fitzwilliam rose, and addressed a va-

riety of observations to the House relative to the state of his Majesty's health with a reference to the important proceeding then about to take place. He observed, he had reason for entertaining doubts that the state of the Sovereign's health was such as to militate, in some degree, against the exercise of that very important part of the royal functions, which he understood, was about to be acted upon. He spoke from an authority on which he thought he could rely. In endeavouring to illustrate the first position, his lordship made a variety of observations upon the report made by the royal physicians at different times, and argued from the general tenor of such as he alluded to, that the Sovereign was not in a state of actual convalescence; the reports seemed, in his idea, rather calculated to flatter the expectations of the public, nor were any hopes of a speedy recovery held out. In the course of his observations, his lordship alluded to the bulletin of this day. As the subject struck his mind upon every thing he had observed or could collect, he was led to entertain doubts which induced him to call upon the noble lord upon the woolsack for farther information relative to the very important point in question.

The *Lord Chancellor* in answer to what had fallen from the noble earl, observed, that for any proposition coming from such a quarter, he entertained the highest respect; indeed upon such a very important topic, observations coming from any individual peer in that House were entitled to the most serious attention. With respect to the doubt, entertained by the noble earl, he could assure his lordship and the House, that in every thing connected with so grave, important, and momentous an occasion as that in question, he had proceeded with all that delicacy, deliberation and caution, which such an occasion evidently required; he had proceeded on the occasion even with fear and trembling; to speak more specifically to the point, he observed, that not satisfied with the reports and assurances of the medical attendants of his Majesty on so important an occasion, he thought it proper and necessary to have a personal interview with the Sovereign, and at which due discussion took place as to the bills which were offered for the royal assent, and which was fully expressed. He would sooner suffer his right hand to be severed from his body, than in such an instance he would agree to act upon light or superficial grounds. He thought it his bounden and indispensable duty, and which he trusted he always had, and always should conscientiously discharge, to proceed in the manner he had stated; and he had

no hesitation to aver, that the result of all that took place upon the occasion, fully and amply justified him, in announcing his Majesty's assent to the bills specified in the royal commission. He knew and felt with gratitude his obligations to the best of Sovereigns, and to whose person he bore the warmest affection. But he could most conscientiously say that no considerations whatever, even those to which he had alluded, should ever induce him to break that sacred covenant he had made with himself, not to suffer any thing to warp his judgment, or to bias him from that rule of strict duty and rectitude which he was determined to follow. He entertained no doubt of the noble earl's having come forward upon a sense of duty, and that he was actuated by nothing personal to himself upon the occasion. He was fully aware of the high degree of responsibility under which he stood; and with reference to which he acted upon the occasion.

The lords commissioners then retired to robe, and when they had taken their seats in the front of the Throne, the Commons were sent for, and appearing at the bar, the royal assent was declared in the usual form to the Irish Bank Restriction Bill, the two Mutiny Bills, the Seed Corn Exportation, the Greenland Whale Fishery, the London Port, the Scotch Bankrupt Laws, and the Duke of York's Estate Bills, and to a few private Bills. After the Commons had retired, their Lordships forwarded the bills which remained upon the table, chiefly of a private or local description, after which the House adjourned till Monday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, March 9.

[MINUTES.]—The Speaker, attended by several members, having pursuant to summons, proceeded to the House of Lords, announced on his return that the royal assent had been given by commission to the Mutiny Bill, the Royal Marine Mutiny Bill, the Irish Bank Restriction Bill, the Duke of York's Estate Bill, the Portugal Corn Indemnity Bill, the Greenland Whale Fishery Bill, the Scotch Creditors Bill, and the London Wet Docks Bill.—Ordered, on the motion of Mr. Hiley Addington, that it be an instruction to the committee appointed to consider the disputes between the masters and journey-men of the cotton trade, that they do also consider of proper measures to prevent such disputes in future, and that they do report their proceedings, with their opinion, &c. to the House. It was also ordered that an account of the several proceedings, taken in

the course of the last session upon the subject of these disputes, should be referred to the said committee.—Sir J. W. Anderson reported from the committee on Messrs. Boydell's Lottery Bill. The report, with the amendments, was agreed to, and the bill was ordered to be read a third time.—Mr. Ormsby obtained leave to bring in a bill to regulate the establishment of the parochial watch, and for other purposes in Dublin.—Sir Wm. Pulteney brought up the report of the committee appointed to consider the petition from the governor and company of the Bank of Scotland, which was agreed to, and leave was given to bring in a bill to enable the said petitioners to make a farther increase of their capital stock.—On the motion of Dr. Duiganan the Irish Clergy Orders Regulation Bill was read a third time and passed.—Mr. Pitt gave notice, that he should bring forward on Thursday next, a motion relative to the naval defence of the country.

[IRISH DUTIES BILL.]—Mr. Corry moved the order of the day for going into a committee on the Irish Duties Bill.

Colonel *Hutchinson* said, it was not his intention to oppose the motion of the rt. hon. gent., but he could not avoid making a few observations upon the schedule before the House. He was willing to pay every tribute to the right hon. gent. the Chancellor of the Exchequer of Ireland, for the candid and liberal manner in which he had conducted himself upon this occasion, but he was sorry to find that the 4 per cent. duty upon Irish exports was to be continued upon every part of the exports of Ireland. The rt. hon. gent. had himself acknowledged, on a former occasion, that the provision trade of Ireland was in a languishing condition, and he thought that was a sufficient reason, why it should be exempt from the general export duty.—He then adverted to the tax upon leather, which, he said, had been laid on under an idea that it could not exceed 1d. per pound, but in fact it was considerably more.—The taxes on saltpetre he particularly condemned, as tending to injure the provision trade of Ireland, which was already too much on the decline; and the proposed abrogation of the drawback heretofore allowed on the exportation of foreign herrings, he was instructed to say, would be attended with serious mischief to the city of Cork, which he had the honour to represent, and which had derived a profit of not less than 80 or 90,000l. per ann. from that traffic. Independently of this loss to a particular port, he recommended to the rt. hon. gent. to consider the injury that would be done to the carrying trade, by removing this encou-

agement to our commerce; and also that if the drawback were set aside, our West India islands were likely to be supplied with herrings by Sweden and other powers. If these points were not attended to, he much feared that such inattention would contribute to aggravate the discontent which prevailed in Ireland, in consequence of the conduct pursued by the present ministers towards that unfortunate country, since their accession to power. This was a consideration, however, which they did not appear much to value, for instead of attempting to conciliate, to cultivate the good opinion of the Irish people, instead of conceding to their just claims, they had manifested a disposition, if that disposition could be judged of from the conduct of their ostensible and favourite agent in Ireland, to impugn the inclinations, to wound the pride, to insult the feelings, and to traduce the character of nine-tenths of the Irish people.

Mr. Ker said, that with regard to the export tax upon linen, considering it as he did as a war tax, he certainly should not oppose it; but, he wished the right hon. gent. to advert to one circumstance, which he considered as bearing hard upon Ireland. By the articles of union, if there was a surplus of any foreign article either in Great Britain or Ireland, it might be exported to the other with a full drawback of the duty; but if a merchant in Ireland wished to export tobacco, for instance, to England, he could only do it in a vessel of a certain size; this appeared to him to be an impediment upon trade. With regard to the window tax, when it was laid on in Ireland, it was always considered as a war tax, though now it was made a permanent one.

Mr. John Latouche adverted to the state of the exchange between Gt. Britain and Ireland, and said it was a subject that called for the immediate attention of Parliament. With regard to the schedule before the House, the rt. hn. gent. had certainly attended with the utmost candour to the representations of the merchants upon the subject, and in most instances their wishes were complied with; in others, however, they were not. There were two articles particularly upon which he thought a reduction of duty ought to take place, and they were foreign oils and foreign hops, the latter he conceived ought to be admitted to be imported free of duty.

Sir John Newport also expressed his thanks to the rt. hn. the Chancellor of the Exchequer for Ireland, for the attention he bestowed upon every suggestion or objection that was made to him. But there were some

points, which he still did not approve of in this schedule. In the first place, he agreed with the hon. gent. (Col. Hutchinson,) with regard to what he had said about the importation of foreign herrings; but the subject to which he wished principally to advert, was the importation of the article of deals into Ireland. He was sorry to find there was an increased duty upon that article. The peasantry of Ireland had of late expressed a wish to have their cottages slated instead of thatched; this disposition he thought ought to be encouraged, because he knew that several villages were actually forced into the rebellion, by the threat of having their cottages burnt, which could be easily accomplished while they were covered with thatch. He therefore really hoped that this duty would not be increased.

Mr. Hawthorne approved of the schedule in general, but wished merely to advert to the increased duty in grocer's licenses. He did not know upon what ground that duty had been increased, and he did not think if it was persisted in that it would be productive of any increase of revenue.

Mr. Corry, after expressing the satisfaction he felt at the approbation which had been expressed of his conduct by so many members from that part of the United Kingdom, proceeded to answer the different objections which had been made. He said that though these duties were now to be voted without limitation, they would of course be liable hereafter to revision, alteration, or repeal, and therefore he hoped that no apprehension would be entertained upon the idea that these taxes were to be voted permanently.—Another observation he wished to make was, that all the duties laid on in Ireland, to correspond with war duties laid on in this country, would of course cease as soon as the war ceased, and the duties were taken off in this country.—With regard to the provision trade of Ireland, it certainly did languish; but he hoped it was only for a time; the fact was, that the war demand had ceased and the peace-demand had not begun, which was a reason for a temporary diminution of the trade; but he had no doubt but that war would soon revive, particularly as there was a large army maintained in Ireland and a large fleet on the coast, and the consumption of provisions by them would at least compensate for the temporary decrease of the foreign trade.—With regard to the drawbacks on sugar, they certainly ought to be the same in both countries, and if there were any instances in which from any mistake they were not so, they would be rectified.—With respect to the leather trade, he

did not conceive that any reduction of the duty was necessary, because it had continued to prosper, and he believed those who were engaged in it were perfectly satisfied. With regard to the duty upon the importation of foreign herrings, he could not agree with the hon. gent. that it ought to be reduced; the duty was 6s. 7d. a barrel, and under that duty the trade had increased, and he was sure it would not be denied that Parliament ought to adopt every means to encourage our own fisheries. With regard to tobacco, the reason why it could only be shipped on board vessels of certain size was, because it was necessary, in order to prevent its being smuggled into the little creeks and harbours of Ireland in small vessels which the custom-house cutters could not follow. He then proceeded shortly to advert to the other objections which had been made to the schedule, but contended that they were not such as ought to induce the House to lower the duties.

Mr. *Danson* observed, that the window tax, which, at the time it was laid on, was professed to be a war tax, appeared in the bill before the House among the permanent taxes. This tax the hon. member recollected, was said, at its introduction, to be pointed particularly at the disaffected; for it was remarked, that as they were not of that description of persons who would contribute to the exigencies of the state, by any tax on wine, &c. they must be made to pay for their light; and the House would no doubt be surprized to hear, that this tax on light was much beyond the rate then levied by a similar tax in this country. The hon. member expressed his disapprobation of the tax on the export of Irish linen, which he considered to be a violation of the letter and spirit of the union; and a full confirmation of the predictions so often delivered by the adversaries of that measure, previous to its enactment; namely, that whenever the interests of the two countries should happen to come in competition, the 100 representatives for Ireland would avail very little, however well disposed towards their native country, against the 588 members who are immediately interested in the concerns of G. Britain.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* defended the measure, and said, he could not see upon what principle of justice Irish linens were to be imported free of duty, while the English linens were to pay a duty of 4 per cent.

Mr. *G. Ponsonby* saw no ground for acceding to the additional tax upon Irish linen. No committee had been instituted to ascertain how far it was just or necessary. The House had nothing to proceed upon in justi-

fication of the measure, but the assertion of the right hon. gent. As to the comparison made between the linen of Ireland and England, the fair mode of considering the question was, whether both countries were equally fit to bear the proposed tax. The reason assigned in support of this equal tax as it was termed, appeared to him to be very extraordinary indeed, viz. that it would be unfair that if Irish and English linen should be shipped in the same ship, the one should be subject to the tax, and the other exempt from it. Then, if that were to be the criterion, it seemed if those goods were carried in different ships, the complaint of inequality in taxation would disappear. The learned member recommended, for the sake of clearness, and for the satisfaction of the House, that the right hon. gent. should draw up two separate schedules, in the one of which should be classed such taxes as were meant to be permanent ones, and in the other the taxes which were to cease at the expiration of the war.

Mr. *Alexander* said, that it would be impossible for even England herself, with her great capital, to rival the north of Ireland in the linen trade, it was so firmly established in that article of commerce.

Mr. *Foster* said, that without entering into any detail upon the subject, he wished only to state, that they were by one act vesting a perpetual revenue in the crown of 3½ millions a year. But this was not all, there was what was called the hereditary revenue of the crown in Ireland, which it was proposed to dispose of without any message or assent being delivered from the throne on the subject.

Mr. *Pitt* said, he certainly was not aware of the objection which had been made by the right hon. gent. who spoke last. He was not prepared now to give a decided opinion upon the subject; but he was prepared to say, that upon such an objection coming from such a quarter, the House ought not to proceed without very maturely considering the subject. If the right hon. gent. was not mistaken in the objection he had made, if the bill now before the House went to produce that effect, and there was no message from the Crown to authorize that proceeding, it was undoubtedly a breach of the proceedings and constitution of Parliament, and one that ought not, and he hoped would not, be passed over lightly.

Mr. *Corry* was about to proceed in further explanation, and to add some further arguments, when he was interrupted by

Mr. *Foster*, who called him to order, saying, that by explanation he understood that

a member of Parliament was to explain what he meant by what he had already said, and not what he was going to say.

The *Speaker* observed, that if it was objected to, the right hon. gent. could not be allowed to go into arguments upon a question to which he had already spoken, without the special leave of the House.

Mr. *Corry* said, that for obvious reasons, and out of respect to the House, he should certainly confine himself to explanation, and be very short; what he had to say arose out of the observations of a right hon. gent., whom he never heard without great respect. He should, however, state how the matter stood. The civil list was granted in Ireland in the 33d of the King, and these provisions which were now under discussion, were enacted in lieu of those duties which subsisted before that time. His Majesty having given up the receipts of his revenue, the hereditary dues to the Crown had merged during that time; but the right to them was not disturbed, but was to revive in full force at the expiration of the term for which the civil list was granted; thus it was, that from year to year the hereditary duties to the Crown remained as it were in abeyance during the continuance of this arrangement between the Crown and the public, but would revive again after the time had expired during which the agreement was in force. This bill was formed on the model of other bills which had passed from year to year in Ireland from that time, and this only to render permanent that system which had been adopted and annually passed in Ireland. The right of the Crown necessarily revives when the period arrived by which the arrangement was at an end; nor was there the least intention to the contrary. Thus the case stood on constitutional principles. Now, a certain portion of these duties was granted annually, some of which were now inserted in this bill, which was proposed to be permanent, and a certain proportion was omitted in this bill, such as the land and malt, that was an annual measure yet; and with regard to the other duties, it was proposed that they should be permanent, and they were, the consolidated fund of Ireland, charged with the interests of the national debt and also the civil list of his Majesty, and that of the proportion which Ireland was to bear of its contribution it was bound to make to the public burthen by the union, as well as all the pension and other parliamentary payments that were to be made. He was not aware there was any thing in this bill, or that any thing would arise out of it, which would in any degree affect the hereditary revenues of the Crown,

longer than they are already by the consent of the Crown, and by agreement between the Crown and the public had been already provided.

Mr. *Foster* said, he should also make a short explanation of what he had said, and that he should do by way of reply to what had been said by the right hon. gent. He had just said, that on forming the consolidated fund of Ireland these hereditary revenues had been given up by his Majesty, by a gracious message, desiring that Parliament might bring them to the public aid, and dispose of them as Parliament should think proper, and that in lieu of them the Crown had a civil list. Now, this agreement could only be binding on the Crown during the existence of the right in his Majesty. His Majesty had only a life interest in these hereditary revenues; but what was to be the effect of this bill. It was that of a perpetual disposal of these hereditary revenues of the Crown, not only during his Majesty's present, but also during every reign to eternity. He would ask, if that was parliamentary? He would ask, was it constitutional to divest the Crown for ever of its rights, without any consent from the Crown, without even so much as a message from the Crown? This was a point too clear to enter largely into it, and therefore he should not trespass any longer on the patience of the House.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, he had not had an opportunity of reading this Bill, and he had no means of knowing what it contained: he did not apprehend it would have the effect stated by the right hon. gent. However, if the words in the bill should be found to go further than his right hon. friend apprehended and had stated, it would be for the House to consider it, when the clause came to be read. The principle of the Bill was clear; but as the interest of the Crown was concerned, it was important to take care that nothing should find its way into it by inadvertency, which might have the effect of disturbing the settlement made between the Crown and Parliament of Ireland, on the hereditary revenues and the civil list, as it took place on the 33d of the King. Now, how did it stand? The Irish Parliament, after this agreement with the Crown, provided that the duties given up to the Crown should be applied to the use of the public for one year, and continued them from year to year, until they had been made permanent since the union; for the practice of the Parliament of Ireland was different from that of England in that respect. His right hon. friend had said, that on public grounds it was expedient that these duties should con-

tinue in operation without a fresh arrangement every year; and this bill was only to render permanent, duties which were voted away by the Parliament of Ireland annually, since the 33d year of the present reign; it was a principle acted upon by the Crown ever since; nor was there the least idea that its operation should continue further than during the life of the Monarch now on the Throne; it could not affect the rights of the Crown afterwards. But the right hon. gent. who spoke last said, that it would be in operation during the succeeding reigns. Now, he had not read the bill, and, therefore, he could not say what it contained, but if it had any provision which might so operate, that provision might be altered. The surrender of these duties, by agreement between the Crown and the Parliament was absolute during the life of his present Majesty; and it was for the Parliament to consider whether the appropriation of them should be permanent or only from year to year. He thought that on sound principles of revenue they ought to be permanent, in order to give to the public credit better security than could attend the passing of them to the public use from year to year. He believed that his right hon. friend would be able to satisfy the jealousy of the House, that there was nothing in the bill to affect the interest of the Crown unfavourably, at least nothing that could not be altered to the satisfaction of the House in a Committee.

Mr. *Rose* wished to know whether there was in this bill, any specific provision to show that the hereditary revenues of the Crown shall revert to the Crown, when that period should occur when there was a demise of the Crown, for if there was no such provision in this bill, he doubted very much, whether the bill should have come into the House at all; and he was sure that if not, the House ought not to go into a Committee upon it, at least until a message came to the House, from the Crown, desiring them to proceed upon such a measure. As to the malt duty in Ireland, which was still an annual vote, he did not know the amount of it so as to be able to judge of the check which Parliament retained in that respect upon the executive government, by way of power to withhold the supplies from year to year. If the right hon. gent. could satisfy the House upon these two points he should be glad to hear him.

Mr. *Corry* said, that accounts had been kept of the hereditary revenues distinct from the others, and he was informed that the law officers in Ireland prepared a clause for

the purpose of saving the rights of the Crown from every thing except the operation of the agreement between the Crown and the Parliament of Ireland, in the 33rd of the Crown. Whether the mode which had been adopted for that purpose was such, was not for him to state; he knew that that principle had always been preserved, and had understood that the provisions were adequate for that purpose. That provision had always been inserted in every revenue bill since the agreement had been entered into between the Crown and the Parliament of Ireland, and he took it for granted that every thing would be adopted by the House that was necessary for perfect clearness. This bill was clearly of the form of former bills, which contained a provision for saving the rights of the Crown. Here he read the provision out of the Statute Book in a former Act of Parliament. Mr. Foster asked if that provision was in the present Bill? Mr. Corry said, he had no doubt of it; the House would consider how it was prepared. He had no doubt it was correct, though he had not had an opportunity of reading it; it was sent to him in the usual manner after it was drawn up by the law officers of the Crown. As to the amount of the duties proposed to be voted permanently, and those which were to be annual, the annual was above one-tenth of the whole.

Mr. *Canning* said, that the first question now, was not whether there was such a clause as that which was alluded to by the right hon. gent. but whether in fact, the House could do any thing further without further explanation, or whether indeed the right hon. gent. ought not to have been ready with his explanation before he came forward with his bill? The next question was, if there was not such a clause, what the House should allow to be done upon such a gross violation of form, and such a substantial objection in principle, so essential to the constitutional practice of the House as occurred in this bill? He put it to the hon. gent. who supported this most defective bill, whether they should not think it more decorous in them to ask leave to withdraw this defective bill, and ask leave to present another less imperfect, as the best manner in which they could atone for the unconstitutional principle on which they had attempted to proceed in this House. It was now allowed on all hands that this was a gross oversight at least; and he thought that going into a Committee to endeavour to cure the defect there, would not be proper, because it would not sufficiently mark the sense of the House

upon a proceeding so glaringly repugnant to its rules, and to one of the most important principles of the constitution.

Mr. *Fox* said, that if there was any foundation in point of fact in the objection, the House would not cure it in a Committee because it could not, according to any rule of practice or principle of the constitution, go into a Committee at all upon the Bill. It was not in the legal power of the House to proceed at all upon a bill of this kind without consent; here there was no pretence that any such consent was given. There could be no doubt whatever, that the House must negative the question that the Speaker do now leave the chair, for the House ought to wait at least until the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who brought in the bill, knew what it contained, before they proceeded to discuss it; the right hon. gent. would hardly ask the House to wait until he himself had had an opportunity of reading it.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that his hon. friend had in the course of this debate—

Mr. *Foster* spoke to order, for that the right hon. gent. had already spoken upon this subject; upon which,

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, I am going to make a motion, Sir, and I have a right to insist on proceeding.

Mr. *Foster* called to order again, for that the right hon. gent. had spoken already in this debate.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he rose for the purpose of making a motion, and he was at liberty, he said to introduce that which he was about to say. He was desirous there should be no difficulty whatever in going upon this bill, and that no one should be called upon to proceed to the discussion of this Bill in a Committee without knowing what the contents of the Bill were, for that reason, he should move that the House should resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House upon this bill to-morrow. If the bill was withdrawn altogether, there would of course be an end of it; otherwise he should negative the question of the Speaker leaving the chair with a view to move afterwards that this bill be committed to a Committee of the whole House to-morrow.

Mr. *Fox* said, the right hon. gent. had claimed his right to be heard, on the ground that he was going to make a motion, the only ground on which he had any right to speak a second time in the debate; thus his claim was allowed in point of order, and yet after all, in point of fact, he did not make any motion, but only gave notice of a

motion which he intended to make; and this was attended with additional irregularity; that he now negatived the question for the Speaker leaving the chair after having once spoke for the Speaker leaving the chair. But he believed it would be of great use to some of his Majesty's ministers, and particularly to the right hon. gent., if they could change the rules of the House so that they might not only change their minds, but be allowed to deliver two opposite opinions in one night, upon one question in a debate.

Mr. *Ormsby* said, that he believed this bill was precisely on the same principle and condition as bills which had formerly passed upon the subject of these duties. He did not feel himself warranted to speak on this bill, not having read it since it was introduced into the House; all he knew was, that the subject to which it referred, was under discussion in Ireland, among the law officers of the crown, of whom he had the honour to be one. He knew the discussion had been the subject of the King's hereditary revenue; perhaps he might be out of order in stating what he was about to state, but he wished to draw the attention of the House to it. He then read the clause which had been inserted in other bills upon this subject, to shew that the rights of the crown had always been saved in them all, as far as related to the hereditary revenues of the crown reverting after the termination of the agreement between the crown and the public, in the 33d year of the present reign. It was for the House to consider whether the words in this clause were sufficient to save the rights of the crown: he apprehended they were, and it had been so thought by the crown lawyers in Ireland. But whether that clause was to be found in the present bill, he would not undertake to say. The bill was in the handwriting of two or three persons, and he took shame to himself that he had not read it since it was laid on the table of that House. All he could say was, that the bill which was considered and perused by the crown lawyers in Ireland of which he presumed this to be a copy, had been by them deemed sufficient to preserve entire the rights of the crown.

Mr. *William Ponsonby* said, he believed this bill contained no such clause as that which had been read by the learned gent. out of another Act of Parliament. In a word, he knew of no way to proceed upon this business, but that of withdrawing the present bill to make way for a better.—The question was then put, that the Speaker do now leave the chair, and negatived.—The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then

moved, that this House do to-morrow resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House.

Mr. Pitt said, he was extremely glad that an opportunity had been given to examine into this question; but it was matter of regret that the attention of the House had not been called to this important circumstance before any progress whatever had been made in the bill, for nothing could be more important for that House to attend to than the hereditary revenues of the crown, and that the more especially, when the measure brought forward was without the consent of the crown, and without an opportunity of discussing the contents of the bill. He was very far from pledging himself as to the opinion he should have on this occasion; but after what he had heard from the hon. gentleman below him (Mr. Ormsby), he had great doubts indeed whether, if the clauses in this bill were, as he had stated them to be, out of another bill, the objection to this measure would be removed, for they only related to a part of his Majesty's revenue, instead of the whole. If so, the defect was radical; for it was a clause by which a stated sum was to be perpetual, and set off against a perpetual revenue of a given value some years ago, but capable of increase with the increasing prosperity of the general revenue of the empire; for during the happy period of his Majesty's reign, from that time to the present, that revenue had increased to several hundred thousand pounds, and that revenue now was much higher than the civil list for which it had been exchanged; so that by this enactment to appropriate in perpetuity the hereditary revenues of the crown, Parliament would be doing neither more nor less than this—to abolish his Majesty's inherent claim to a permanent improveable revenue, and giving for it a fixed unimproveable sum, and that too, without any consent or intimation on the part of the crown. If this was the case, and nothing had been said to induce him to doubt it, he could not help saying, it was very unfortunate that the attention of the House had not been called to it before any progress was made in the bill; for it was matter of great importance, upon the constitutional principle, that the hereditary revenues of the crown should not be taken away by Parliament without the consent of the crown; that was a principle which it was impossible to be the wish of any of the King's ministers to neglect, and quite as little could it be the wish of any Member of that House.

—The question was then put, that this House do to-morrow resolve itself into the said Committee, and agreed to.

[*IRISH MILITIA FAMILIES.*]—Mr. Foster said, that some days ago he mentioned a matter of serious moment to Ireland, which was, an apparent breach of faith of Parliament with the militia of Ireland. In November the militia were embodied in Ireland by order of the lord-lieutenant; they were embodied by the existing law; by that law each militiaman who provided for his relatives was to have 2s. per week for his wife, and 1s. for his father, mother, or child, who were to be maintained by him. In August following, this law was repealed, by which these 2s. were reduced to 1s. The militia had been embodied under the faith of the first, and no compensation was given to them for the reduction; this was a breach of faith, at which the militia murmured very much. He had letters informing him of much discontent upon this occasion, nor would he be answerable for the consequences, if some measure was not taken; and if taken at all, it must be taken before the assizes, which are now approaching, otherwise it would be too late.

Mr. Secretary Yorke admitted the difficulty stated by the right hon. gent., and he should call the attention of the House to it; but the chief secretary of the lord lieutenant had brought the bill forward; he had not yet had an opportunity of considering that subject, but in a few days he should come forward with an amendment to that bill, or a separate bill for that purpose.

[*LORD KILWARDEN'S FAMILY.*]—Mr. George Ponsonby asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether it was intended to take any step towards making some provision for the family of the late Lord Kilwarden; it was now near 8 months since that tragical event happened, by which he was destroyed. His family were not in affluent circumstances, and the consideration of the manner in which he came to his untimely and lamented fate, and the recollection of his virtues, made this a matter of great concern, and he thought that no time should be lost in making an adequate provision for his family; and he was sure every loyal man in the empire would feel the necessity of this attention on the part of the government.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, that this subject was one on which his Majesty's servants had not been inattentive, and he believed in the course of a few days the attention of the House would be called to it.

[**HIS MAJESTY'S INDISPOSITION.**—**Mr. Grey.**—I wish Sir, to say a very few words, on a subject which appears to me to be of the utmost importance. The attention of the House has this day been necessarily called, by witnessing in the House of Lords an instance of the personal exercise of an Act of Authority from the King.—Sir, the inference naturally drawn from that Act of authority, so exercised, is undoubtedly of the most satisfactory nature. It would indeed be completely satisfactory to me, if I were assured by the right hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that that Act was done in full health, which its publicity indicates, and without which such an act of authority ought not to have been exercised. It would have been satisfactory to me if there were not some doubts upon that subject: but, under all the circumstances, considering what we know from public reports, and comparing them with declarations made in this House and other places, there does appear to me to be some doubt and mystery upon this transaction, which leave on my mind sentiments of considerable uneasiness and apprehension. It would be great relief and satisfaction to me to have this serious apprehension removed by an explicit declaration from the minister; but, if not, the House is placed in a new and awful situation, in which it will be incumbent on us to think what steps it may be proper for us to take.

[**VOLUNTEER CONSOLIDATION BILL.**—**Mr. Secretary Yorke** immediately rose, and moved the order of the day upon the Volunteer Consolidation Bill.—On the clause for allowing adjutants and quarter-masters half-pay.

Mr. Whilbread observed, that there were many persons who had never been in the regulars, but who, from the excellence of their conduct as adjutants in volunteer corps were, he thought, equally intitled to half-pay. He was of opinion, that it should depend upon the report of the inspecting field-officer as to the good discipline of the corps, whether the adjutant of such corps should be entitled to such pay or not.

Mr. Secretary Yorke said, it was necessary to lay down a general principle, with respect to the half-pay to be allowed to adjutants, as otherwise, persons who acted as adjutants in volunteer corps, and who were wholly incompetent, might become entitled to it, and thus saddle considerable expense upon the public. To this rule, however, there might be some exceptions, as, if the inspecting field officer reported the good qualifications of an adjutant, it certainly

was intended to represent such case to his Majesty, with a view that such adjutant might become entitled to the allowance in question.

Mr. Pitt said, he agreed in the general outline with respect to adjutants receiving pay. He thought however that where there was a difficulty in getting good adjutants, that serjeant-majors, from regular troops might be resorted to as adjutants for volunteer corps. He then adverted to, and re-stated his former proposition, with respect to transferring officers from the line as field officers in volunteer corps.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, it was the strong disposition of ministers to agree to any thing that could tend to improve the discipline of the volunteer corps, consistent with the nature and principles of the constitution. It was his opinion that the purpose of the right hon. gent. would be better answered by the appointment of inspecting field officers who were appointed from officers of the line. He objected to the proposition of the right hon. gent. for the appointment of field officers to volunteer corps from the line, because the volunteers should not be led to suppose that it was intended to graft upon the system any thing not congenial to its nature. He knew that a degree of jealousy had been caused in some volunteer corps by the appointment of inspecting field officers, because they were liable to a sort of compulsory inspection by persons receiving pay. He was convinced, however, of the necessity of appointing inspecting field officers, and that the volunteers could not be an efficient force without them; but if field officers from the line were introduced into the volunteer corps, it would necessarily create jealousy. It had been made part of the proposition, that field officers from the line should not be appointed to volunteer corps without the consent of the commanding officers; but this was placing a commanding officer in a situation of great difficulty and delicacy. If he recommended the appointment of a field officer from the line, it might be considered as a confession of his own insufficiency; whilst, if he refused to assent to a recommendation of that nature, he might be liable to censure; add to this, there were many volunteer corps which already had the benefit of the assistance of military officers of great experience, either as commandants, or as holding commissions in such corps. At the same time it was his wish that it should be a part of the instructions from the commander in chief to the general officers commanding districts, to spare field officers from the regulars, where-

ever it can be done, in order to perfect the discipline of the volunteer corps. He repeated that the object of the right hon. gent. was answered by the appointment of inspecting field officers, and also by the appointment from the line of adjutants and serjeant majors.

Mr. Pitt said, as to the appointment of inspecting field officers, it was obvious that could not interfere with his proposal of appointing field officers from the line to assist in disciplining volunteer corps, as the persons appointed inspecting officers held the rank of lieut. colonels—whilst he proposed to appoint persons, probably captains, from half pay. At least they might try whether any such persons might be obtained; at any rate, the two descriptions of persons were wholly distinct, as no one was appointed an inspecting officer who had not been a field officer in the army, whilst he proposed to take field officers for volunteers from those in the line who held subaltern commissions. The right hon. gent. had said, that such a measure would be likely to create jealousy: he was sorry to hear it, but certainly the appointment of inspecting field officers was not sufficient to render volunteer corps in any degree well disciplined. Some of those officers had half a county to attend to, and he would ask, whether they could in that case do much more than relate what they had been told by others, with respect to the discipline of corps, instead of being intimately acquainted with it themselves? He was now, however, told, that because persons had been appointed to see that instructions had been given to volunteer corps, that it was unnecessary to appoint persons to instruct them: he could not conceive this to be very conclusive reasoning. He did not believe that any jealousy would be excited by the appointment of field officers of the description he had alluded to; it would rather be caused by the appointing inspecting field officers, who were superior to the commanders of the regiments. Add to this, that inspecting field officers were appointed by a compulsory regulation, whilst all he proposed was to provide field officers where it was requested by the commanding officers of corps, therefore there was still less cause for jealousy. Another ground of objection was, that commanding officers would be placed in a situation of great delicacy; but he did not see the force of this objection. Suppose the commanding officer were to recommend the appointment of a field officer from the line to his corps, he would only indicate that he was a man

of common sense, and that he was more anxious to do his duty than to be actuated by trifling vanity; on the other side, if he declined such accommodation, he might be liable to censure for not doing that which he ought to do. As to any objection of economy, the saving which might arise from not pursuing the regulations he proposed, ought not to be put in competition with the advantages which would arise from its adoption. For these reasons he was still inclined to persist in urging the propositions which he had before made.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that if the description of persons alluded to by the right hon. gent. were appointed, they might assume an importance which would be inconsistent with the general system of the corps. He instanced the volunteers of Ireland, who had no such officers, and who had displayed the best discipline, as well as the greatest courage and zeal.

General Loftus objected to officers being sent from camps or other military stations in the hour of danger to discipline volunteer corps.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, his idea was, that such assistance should be at the discretion of the general of the district.

Mr. Pitt said, that in the maritime districts such assistance might be provided, but with respect to the corps in the interior, they should be assisted in discipline by officers from half pay.

Mr. W. Dickenson observed that there must be good officers to make good soldiers. As to economy, it was not a question of economizing money, but the blood and lives of the people; it was necessary to have good officers to ensure discipline, and it was necessary to have discipline in order to ensure success; and he would ask whether defeats were considered as cheap articles by the present administration? If an enemy were to land, the country might have reason to curse such parsimony. If the bill now before the House was made any thing of, it would be made by the minority, and not by the majority; for if it had passed as originally brought in, it would have been one of the strong instances of the weak conduct of a feeble administration.

Mr. Hiley Addington said, he would leave to the decision of the House and the public the hon. gentleman's charge of economy against the present administration. He objected to any measure for the introduction of field officers from the line into volunteer corps, as it would tend to create dissensions

amongst the officers and privates of these corps.

Mr. *Windham* wished to understand precisely the meaning of his right hon. Friend's (Mr. Pitt) proposition, as he could not consent to rob the line of officers, in order to discipline volunteer corps.

Mr. *Pitt* said, his proposition was to take officers from the half pay, where they were useless, and to make them useful by contributing to discipline volunteer corps.

Mr. *C. Wynne* deprecated the economy of ministers, as its only object was to diminish their expenses, which were to come before Parliament, whilst a greater weight fell upon the people.

Mr. *Spencer Stanhope* adverted to the erection of beacons, and instanced one in the West Riding of Yorkshire, guarded by four persons, one of whom had only one leg, another had only one arm, the third had lost the roof of his mouth, and the fourth was notoriously drunken, and each of these were paid half-a-guinea per day.

Mr. Secretary *Yorke* said, that beacons had been erected in the West Riding of Yorkshire without consulting the general of the district, Lord Mulgrave.

Mr. *Spencer Stanhope* said, they were erected by order of the general of the district.

Mr. Secretary *Yorke* said, he had understood the contrary.—After some further observations from Lord Temple, Sir Wm Milner, Sir Henry Mildmay, and other members the clause was agreed to.

On the clause relating to the recovery of fines and penalties,

Mr. *Pitt* suggested that it would be better to give an option in case of non-payment, either to levy the fine by distress, or to inflict imprisonment for two or three days or a week, as the distress might be injurious to the family of the person distressed upon.

Mr. *G. Vansittart* was for extending the imprisonment to a fortnight.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer thought the imprisonment of the individual would be more injurious to his family than levying the fine by distress.

Mr. *Pitt* explained, that the idea was, to vest a discretionary power in the Magistrate, to imprison, suppose for a week, in the default of distress.

Sir *R. Buxton* strongly recommended the allowing a certain number of days, at the expiration of which, if the penalties were not paid, the Magistrate should have the power of committing in the case of default.

Mr. *Sturges Bourne* contended, that the optional power proposed to be given to the Magistrates, proceeded on the most humane

and liberal principle that it was possible to introduce into a case of pecuniary penalty.

Mr. *Burland* proposed the introduction of a clause, in substance enacting, that in case of a refusal or neglect to pay the fine after a given number of days, it should then be lawful for the Magistrate to commit, &c.

Mr. *Hobhouse* spoke shortly in support of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's idea in favour of the mode of distress, as imprisonment would evidently prevent the individual from earning the accustomed provision for his family.

Mr. *Whitbread* said he was inclined to make the opulent private pay in his purse; but would not resort to imprisonment, except where it was indispensably necessary. The proceeding of distress, he thought one of extreme oppression; but as some principle of compulsion must obtain, he thought the option of distress or imprisonment should be given. With respect to the application of these penalties, they were to go to the common fund of the different corps for defraying the necessary expenses, &c. But, in observing upon this point, he must repeat what he had said thereon on a former occasion; he thought it would be a sounder and more manly policy to come forward at once and provide for the payment of such expenses out of the public purse; as he predicted, for want of certain and unfailing funds, the greater number of the corps would fall to pieces and cease to exist. This he said, to a certain degree, was exemplified by the instance of one of the City corps, where, out of the requisite sum of about 11,000*l.* he understood 7 or 8,000*l.* or some very large sum remained due.—Several corps were destitute of the most necessary articles. It was now of little consequence, whether the plan of subscription was originally a wise measure. He thought it, now at least, very improper; they were providing for a permanent system in the bill. As that was the case, let them do it with their eyes open, let them not blink the genuine question; they should contemplate the danger as it ought to be viewed. There were many articles of expense absolutely necessary to be incurred in respect of the volunteer corps: keeping the arms clean and in repair, was one of the principal items; the payment of the drummers was another indispensable requisite: he wished to know whether that was to be provided for out of any particular fund? There was more money thrown away in respect of the volunteers since their institution than would set on foot an immense regular force: let the private subscriptions and annual contribu-

tions be calculated, and see what an immense aggregate they would amount to! The present system was one of the most profuse and extravagant that was ever yet broached. [Here one or two members rose, and expressed their sentiments, that what Mr. Whitebread was advancing, was not in order.] Mr. Whitebread resumed. What he said was strictly in order, and advanced then with a view to save the time of the House; the penalties were applicable to the funds, his observations were therefore in order. As to the question, he reprobated the utter want of economy in the system. A large regular force might have over and over again been put in activity for less money. In process of time, the present sources would fail; individuals would every year become more weary or less able to pay the contributions. Speaking more immediately to the point in question, were the alternative of imprisonment resolved on, he should prefer the shortest possible period.

Mr. *H. Lascelles* thought that the accumulation of fines should be prevented, as they might run up to an amount that might impede the resignation of a member when he should so determine.

Mr. *Pitt* referred the hon. Member to a particular part of the clause, where the case was provided for by the words.

Mr. *Rose* expressed his opinion, that the magistrates should be vested with the power of committing to the nearest place of confinement. The clause, as amended, was then agreed to.

Some discussion then took place, respecting a subsequent provision in the bill, similar to the preceding one, in some of its effects, but principally affecting a superior class of individuals. It was contended on the part of those who supported the bill, that those persons who were able to pay, but who from obstinacy, or other motives, did not choose to pay, should be decidedly compellable; and with respect to those, the option of distress or imprisonment, was proposed to be left.

Mr. *For* objected to the principle, as regulated by the provisions of the bill. Though the members had agreed to the payment of certain fines, they had no idea of eventually incurring a capital punishment; by such a regulation, the volunteer was put in a different situation from that in which he considered himself, when making his agreement.

Mr. *Pitt* observed, that a degree of compulsion in the case under discussion was evidently necessary. They should recollect that the right of the volunteer to resign was admitted, in case he was not satisfied with the regulations. The discipline of the corps was surely necessary to be preserved; and

farther, the fines arose out of the regulations agreed to by the individuals themselves. The principle was not new to this act. In the original act a provision to that effect obtained, but it was not modified by the optional power. The points at issue resolved into two questions: the first, whether in default of distress, proceedings should be had against the person; the latter was certainly one in analogy to the law of the country; and the second, which involved the only new point, was, whether an alternative of subjecting the individual to imprisonment should be allowed, and that this was the more lenient of the two he thought had been clearly established. After considering the topic a little farther, he expressed his concurrence in the regulation for allowing the optional power. Some further clauses and provisions of the bill were then agreed to without observation, when it was agreed to report progress, and ask leave to sit again. The House then resumed, and the Committee were ordered to sit again to-morrow. Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Saturday, March 10.

[*MINUTES.*]—The Dublin Watch Bill was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time.—A new writ was ordered for Preston, in the room of John Horrocks, esq. deceased.—The Committee on the Irish Countervailing Duty Bill was put off till Monday.—The Irish Malt Bill was read a second time.

[*IRISH DUTIES BILL.*]—Mr. *Corry* moved the order of the day for going into a committee on the Irish Duties Bill. The order having been read, the right hon. gent. said, that before he made any further motion upon this subject he wished to say a few words. In the course of the debate of yesterday, some doubt was thrown out, that the bill before the House was one that affected the interest of the crown, and that, therefore, the royal assent ought to have been signified. He was ready at that time, and he was ready now, if it were proper, to show that the bill was conformable to the precedents of the Parliament of Ireland. He also understood, though on this point he could not speak so positively, that it was not without precedent in the Parliament of Gt. Britain before the Union; and in the Imperial Parliament, since the Union, there were precedents, viz. the three different acts which had passed relative to these duties; it was true they were only annual bills, and therefore he did not rely entirely upon them. But though there

were precedents of that nature, if it could enter into the imagination of any man that this measure trenching upon any constitutional principle, he certainly would be the last man to take advantage of them. But as there had not been sufficient time since the doubts had been thrown out, to ascertain how the principle stood affected by this proceeding, he should, in order that full time may be given for consideration, move to postpone the committee till Monday.

Mr. *Foster* said, that the great doubts and difficulties which had arisen in his mind upon the subject were founded upon the circumstance of this bill being perpetual, therefore he did not conceive that annual bills could be considered as any precedent. The motion was then agreed to.

[*VOLUNTEER CONSOLIDATION BILL.*] — Mr. Secretary *Yorke* moved the order of the day for going into a Committee on the Volunteer Consolidation Bill. The House having resolved itself into a Committee, the rt. hon. Secretary proceeded to propose some new clauses. The first was, to invalidate any agreements that might have been entered into between masters and servants, by which the latter were prevented from entering into volunteer corps. The next was a clause to repeal a clause in a former bill, compelling the parish to pay the drill sergeants; they are in future to be paid out of the public purse. These clauses were agreed to.—The next was a clause authorising the commander of a corps, in case of any member misbehaving himself, to deprive him of that day's pay, or else to disallow that day as one of his days of exercise.

Mr. *Pitt* said, the clause now proposed would have some effect, but still he did not think it would be sufficient. He had prepared some clauses upon this subject, which would go a little farther. One of them was to give the commander of a corps a power to order any member misbehaving himself while under arms, into custody during the time the corps remained under arms; to inflict fines as high as 5s. in case of non-attendance, not taking care of their arms, &c. He did not think that this would give any offence to the volunteer corps, because it certainly was not an unnecessary severity. He meant this to be a general clause applicable to all corps. If a person should feel himself dissatisfied with these regulations, which he did not think probable, still they had the power to resign. But he entertained no apprehensions upon the subject, and he should certainly take an opportunity of proposing them in some stage of the bill.

Mr. *Tierney* said, he very much approved

of the regulations suggested by the right hon. gent. but he was apprehensive that some corps in town would feel a degree of jealousy upon the subject. They were in many respects different from most of the corps in the country: they received no pay and many of the members who kept shops, who perhaps had only one apprentice, or perhaps none, would feel themselves much hurt at being fined so heavily, when they really could not leave their business without the greatest inconvenience. But as to the power of ordering a member under an arrest for misconduct while under arms, he thought there could be no objection to it.

Mr. *Pitt* said, that these regulations might be applied only to the corps who received pay.

Colonel *Eyre* thought there was no occasion for further regulations, and therefore should object to these clauses.

The Marquis of *Titchfield* approved entirely of the ideas of Mr. *Pitt* upon this subject, and thought they were highly advantageous to the volunteer system. If he might presume to offer anything in addition to that which came from so high an authority, it would be, that the point of discipline to which the clause referred, should be judged of by a military council in the way of a court martial, subject to the approbation of the commander of each corps.

Mr. Secretary *Yorke* thought both the clauses which he had proposed, and those proposed by the right hon. gent., might be adopted, for they were not in the least inconsistent with each other. He approved of the system of imprisoning volunteers among themselves for the day, when they were under arms, if they had misconducted themselves in the ranks; and he thought the ideas submitted to the committee by that rt. hon. gent. very good. He dissented from the mode in which Mr. *Pitt's* clause proposed to levy the fines, but thought they should be submitted to a court martial, as had been hinted by a noble marquis: he thought also that all these proceedings for fines and penalties should be subject to the approbation of the commander of each corps, &c.

Mr. *Lascelles* thought, that, generally speaking, it was impolitic to impose on volunteer corps any other fines than those which originated with themselves.

Mr. *Pitt* said, that he had not so distinctly, perhaps as he might have, stated what he meant by misconduct of a volunteer under arms; he did not mean general misconduct, for which the commander had power already to punish him, in some degree, by expressing displeasure, &c.; he did not mean to

give a general latitude to the commander to punish in the specific manner he proposed for general misconduct, but he meant to apply the punishment he proposed, if any volunteer under arms, should particularly misbehave, should neglect his arms and accoutrements, or cloathing, in any remarkable manner, or should behave himself indecently, or act contrary to most of the rules and regulations of the corps, then some punishment might follow, and that the punishment should be specific in order that there should be no doubt what the result must be of such misconduct. Perhaps the better way would be to take the clause of the rt. hon. gent. first, and then that his (Mr. Pitt's) clauses might be brought up and read, so that the committee might the better understand the meaning of them; which course was adopted. He proposed that persons misbehaving in the way he stated, should be imprisoned in their own corps for the day they were out, &c. That in some instances the fine should be as high as 5s.; in others, no higher than 1s. to be regulated by the fact, whether the party incurring the forfeit contributed to the poor's rate or not. Mr. Pitt professed himself very happy to hear the sentiments of the noble marquis on all occasions, and particularly on the present. He did not entertain any doubt of the propriety of the court martial suggested by that noble lord, provided the sentence of the court martial was made subject to the approbation of the commander, but he owned he thought the summary power of other punishment might be more effectual than the fines themselves.—After some further conversation, the clause of the Secretary of State was received and agreed to, as were all his other clauses. After which, Mr. Pitt proposed his clauses, which, he said, he submitted to the committee without saying any thing in their behalf at present. The first clause for providing for the fines being read,

The *Attorney General* thought, as a permanent system, the clause a very wise one, but doubted whether it was advisable to adopt it at the present moment under all circumstances. He was afraid it might be, under all the circumstances, endeavouring to do too much; it was better, perhaps, to do a little less, although the system was defective, than by endeavouring to make it perfect, possibly in some measure to overturn it. He was afraid of proceeding too far upon the compulsory system with volunteers; that might be reserved in case his Majesty should call forth his subjects under the compulsory enrolment.

Mr. Pitt suggested, that much of the objections which seemed to be entertained

against too much of the compulsory system being applied to volunteers might be done away, by making a distinction between those receiving pay, and those who did not. He thought, upon a moderate computation, the system he proposed would improve the military discipline of 150,000 men in a very short time; an object well worth attending to at this important crisis: and this he meant as applicable to those who might not come forward, under an invitation, to put themselves on permanent duty, which, after all was the very best way to make them good soldiers. This was a matter not to be neglected, for we might look for the event in which we should have to resist the enemy, in the course of a few weeks at farthest; now he could have no hesitation in saying that might be done effectually by the volunteers, discreetly mixt with the forces of the line; and to do so effectually, care should be taken of the improvement of the volunteers in their discipline. He felt this so forcibly, that he must press it upon the House.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* agreed with the *Attorney General* upon this subject, that it was dangerous to try to accomplish too much in the system of military exercise of the volunteers: but he thought the volunteers had already made great progress in that matter. It was proposed that 25 days would be sufficient to instruct them tolerably; now, there were hardly any of them who had not been instructed for 40, and some of them for more than 60 days. He was persuaded that Parliament had acted wisely in giving the volunteers an opportunity of acting as they have, and he could not help thinking that the degree of discipline they had acquired already, would afford us all a degree of confidence, not only in their further improvement, but also warrant our reliance on their sufficiency to meet any veterans of the enemy. He conceived, that at this moment, the volunteers had attained such a degree of discipline as no one at the time of their first establishment had any idea of, nor even at the time when the first volunteer bill was introduced; and he owned that he contemplated with astonishment, as well as satisfaction, the degree of perfection at which the volunteer system was now arrived, and this justified the hope that a very large portion of the volunteers of England, mixed with the regular troops, were fit to meet the veteran troops of France, and that our meeting of them so would give us nothing short of hope and full confidence of immediate success. But he did entertain strong doubts of the propriety of this clause, on the ground which had been stated by his

learned friend, the Attorney General. He observed, that in the last war, the volunteers were only 150,000, and yet they answered the purpose for which they were intended; no one complained of their inefficiency in the course of the last war; they achieved a great object in the course of their services in Ireland, although they were neither half so numerous, or under any such regulations as they are at present. His main object was, that regulations of the volunteers should be left as much as possible to the volunteers themselves; that Parliament should interfere as little as possible with the internal regulations and management of volunteer corps, and particularly in the system of inflicting penalties. He had no doubt of the efficacy of the system recommended by the right hon. gent. (Mr. Pitt) as a permanent system; but the doubt was, whether there was not some risk in adopting it at the present moment.

Mr. Pitt said, he certainly was willing to hope with the right hon. gent., and to believe, and even to be confident, that there was indeed a very considerable portion of the volunteers of Great Britain, who, in concert with the regular force, would be of great utility in the contest which we are now to expect; but he could not disguise from the House, because he could not disguise from himself, that very many of the volunteers were in no degree advanced to that state of discipline in which we could wish to see them, and in which it was indispensably necessary they should be in, before they could be essentially serviceable to their country, when called out for its defence, and in support of its existence. There was an error in the judgment of many gentlemen who had spoken upon the subject of the military discipline of the volunteers of England from the brilliant corps of the metropolis, where as it was notorious that many corps in the country were in nothing like the same state; many of them had but just received their arms, which under the many difficulties with which we had to encounter, was not to be wondered at. But from what he himself knew, and from the credible information he received from others, from the various fluctuations and uncertainty that were incident to this system, there were many of them in a state in which it was impossible to say they were any thing approaching that situation described by the right hon. gent. He did not say that many of the volunteers, who may in the course perhaps of three weeks be put to the proof, and may have to meet with the veteran troops of France, that they would not acquit themselves with honour in union with

troops of the line, nor that ultimately they would not be successful in the contest for the defence of the country; that was not the question to be now discussed; the question now was this: What was the most speedy mode of making the volunteers efficient for the purposes of action, with as little loss of blood as possible? For that was to us the most interesting part of the subject, and with the care of which that House was entrusted.—As to what has been said of the volunteers of Ireland in the last war, it did not apply to the present case. They had long been called out, and had been on permanent duty for months, and some of them for years, and acquired the qualities of veteran troops, which was not hitherto the case with the present volunteers. He did not say there was any doubt that our volunteers would meet and defeat the veteran troops of France, but the question was, what was the best mode to make them meet the enemy with the best chance of saving the effusion of British blood? He was not to be told what the volunteers were the last war; for no man would say, however serious the apprehensions of invasion was during the last war, that the danger was then any thing like the danger with which we were threatened now. There never was a period in which the preparations for invading this country, were upon any thing like the scale of the present preparations; so much so, that Parliament had already expressed its sense to that effect by the measures it had brought forward. It had, indeed, once thought of making many regulations upon the discipline of the volunteers; but had afterwards confided that subject to the discretion of ministers, in the hope that much would have been done, but ministers disappointed that hope, and therefore Parliament ought now to act for itself.—As to the idea of not attempting to do too much, it was observable that, if these regulations were likely to have a bad effect on the volunteer system, the hopes which he entertained that many of them would consent to be put upon permanent duty, by which they would certainly be subject to much more rigour, were very ill founded; he did, however, entertain sanguine hopes they would, in great numbers, accept of the invitation to be put on permanent duty, as the very best means to make them a good military force, and to exercise ourselves before the French come was the best mode of enabling us to meet them when they do, not only with a certainty of triumph, but also with a reasonable expectation of conducting the contest with as little effusion as

possible of British blood. He should be glad if every volunteer in England could put himself for a while on permanent military duty; but that in the nature of things, was impossible; there were many who could not possibly so engage. He admitted that much had been done already, but that was no reason why we should not do as much more as possible. This was a matter to be considered most seriously. Comparisons between this and the last war were absolutely idle. The whole of the preparations of France for invasion last war were hardly equal to an advanced guard of one of its numerous posts at present. He did not disparage the merit of the volunteers, nor was he insensible of what they had already done; he only enforced the necessity of doing every thing that was in our power to meet, upon the best possible advantage, the enemy, and that in a few weeks to decide a contest on which not the interest or welfare, but the existence of this country, was at stake. Neither did he wish to disparage the valour of his countrymen. He knew what men contending for their freedom and existence, unarmed and undisciplined, could do; nor had he any idea that the efforts of a whole people, such as Britons, would not be ultimately successful although they might be undisciplined. He knew that every freeman ought to be a hero in such a contest, and he was confident that few, indeed, among us, would disappoint the expectations of their country in that extremity, should we come to it. But that was not the question. The matter for the consideration of the House was, what was the best mode for meeting the tremendous and awful contest, which must be expected in a few weeks, upon a rational expectation of spilling as little British blood as such a contest can possibly admit? The crisis was at a certainty approaching; it would be our own fault if we were not prepared for it. It would be the fault of that House if it should not do every thing in its power to prepare for it. No man in the kingdom ought to have any reason hereafter to reproach himself with negligence upon such a subject.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* desired to make one or two observations which he had omitted to state when discussing the proposition of the right hon. gent. He must deny that experience shewed the necessity of the measure recommended. He had heard of no complaints made by any corps, as to an insufficiency of internal discipline. He adverted to the provision for withholding a certain part of the pay

of the volunteers while upon military duty, which he considered as likely to tend, in a considerable degree, to the maintenance of good order and discipline. This, in effect, went to subject the volunteer to a mulct who should misconduct himself while under arms.—The question being loudly called for, a division took place, when there appeared

Ayes	:	:	:	:	26
Noes	:	:	:	:	27

Majority against the Clause 1

The remaining clauses and schedules, &c. of the bill were then gone through by the Committee; the report was received by the House *pro forma*, and the bill ordered to be again recommitted on Monday.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, March 12.

Mr. Erskine and Mr. Alexander were heard for the appellant in the appeal Duke of Queensbury v. McMurdo. To be further proceeded with on Wednesday.—Several private bills were forwarded in their respective stages, and their lordships adjourned till to-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, March 12.

[MINUTES.]—Sir W. Pulteney brought up the Scotch Bank Bill, which was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time on a day afterwards to be fixed.—On the motion of Sir J. Henderson, the Temple Bar Improvement Bill was read a second time, and referred to a Select Committee.—Boydell's Lottery Bill was read a third time, and ordered to the Lords.—Mr. Hurst presented a petition from John Wilson, confined in Newgate for prevarication before the Aylesbury Election Committee, stating several circumstances in mitigation of his offence, and praying for those reasons that the House would have the goodness to order his discharge. The petition having been received, the said John Wilson, the petitioner, was ordered to appear at the bar of the House on Wednesday next, in order to his being discharged.—A message was brought from the Lords, announcing their concurrence to several private bills.—On the motion of Mr. Vansittart, the Bill for permitting the Importation of Raw Hides, &c. into Ireland was read a third time and passed.—A petition was presented from the trustees of the British Museum, praying for further

aid. Ordered to lie on the Table. It was moved, That there be laid before the House the different sums already granted to the Museum, which was accordingly ordered.—The Chancellor of the Exchequer moved the order of the day for a Committee of the whole house on the supply. Moved, That the order stand over to Wednesday next. Agreed to.—The Chancellor of the Exchequer presented to the House, by his Majesty's command, "An Account shewing the charge of the civil list, as estimated by the account laid before Parliament the 6th of July, 1786, and the charge of the same in the year ending the 5th of January, 1804, with the increase and decrease thereof, as near as the same can be ascertained;" and also, "An Account of the payments which had been made on the 5th of January, 1804, in discharge of the debt of the civil list on the 5th of January, 1802, shewing the excess or diminution of the charges paid compared with estimates of the debt laid before Parliament;" and also, "An Account of the debt of his Majesty's civil list, on the 5th of January, 1804, as near as the same can be ascertained." Ordered that the said accounts be referred to the Committee appointed to consider of the charge upon his Majesty's civil list revenue.

[EXCHEQUER BILLS.]—The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* moved the order of the day for the Committee of Ways and Means. The Speaker having left the chair, the Chancellor of the Exchequer rose, he said, in pursuance of a notice which he had formerly given, to move the House for a vote of two millions on Exchequer Bills, for the farther service of the year. He moved for this loan, the right hon. gent. said, that time might be given to arrange the taxes to be raised within the year, and to give them as great a latitude as possible.—The House having resumed, the report was ordered to be received to-morrow.

[IRISH DUTIES BILL.]—Mr. *Corry* moved, in pursuance of the order of the day, the Committee of the whole House on the Irish Duty Bill. On the question being put from the chair,—Mr. *Corry* said, that on a former evening an objection had been offered on the measure proposed by this bill, founded on an idea that it went to affect the hereditary revenue of the Crown, and that, therefore, no measure of the kind could be legally entered into, without obtaining his Majesty's previous consent. If he had mistaken the grounds of the objection he should be glad to be set right; and

as he saw the right hon. gent. (Mr. *Foster*) in his place, begged to be informed if he had not stated the objection fairly.

Mr. *Foster* admitted that such certainly were the grounds of his objection, and to which he was still inclined to adhere.

Mr. *Corry* admitted, that the interests of the Crown were affected by the present measure, but wished the House to consider in what manner they were affected; if it was not in the same manner as by similar measures adopted in this country. The hereditary revenue of the Crown took its origin in Ireland about the same period as in this country, and is, perhaps, more extensive there than here; he meant, he said, in its operation. The right hon. gent. here mentioned several duties which were not known in this country. For the defence of the country there was also an excise inland and import, and for defending the seas, as it was called, customs had been granted. But it was not till the reign of Charles the II. that any hereditary or private revenues had been granted to the Crown. In the 14th and 15th of Charles II. duties had been granted for this purpose on teas and tobacco. A duty of 2½d per lb. on tobacco was granted to Charles II. Additional duties had been granted also to William III. on the same article, but with a clause, at the same time, declaring 2½d per pound, as formerly, the hereditary duty and were continued so till the Consolidation Act, in the 31st of the present King, when 2½d per pound was again declared to be the hereditary duty, and those additional duties were supposed to expire on the demise of the King. In the 31st of the King also a civil list was granted to his Majesty, on the same principles as in this country: and this civil list was considered as an equivalent for the hereditary duties belonging to the Crown, and as accepted instead of them. That they might have the hereditary revenue in their own power, they entered into a contract with the Crown. Whatever the amount of the hereditary revenues might be, that they reserved the power of increasing or diminishing, or otherwise modifying them. After the civil list had been thus established, other additional duties were granted sessionally, some times for five years running. These were at first granted triennially, when Parliament was triennial; and afterwards annually; but uniformly the same clause in regard to the 2½d per pound on tobacco, as the hereditary duty, was inserted, for which no consent of the Crown was ever asked or

given. For this reason the right hon. gent. conceived, that the precedents of the Parliament of Ireland would by no means justify any objection of that kind that was brought forward. In the 14th and 15th of Charles II. a duty of 6 per cent. had been laid on tea. That duty continued to be levied *ad valorem* according to the old book of rates, till Geo. II. when a new book of rates was made out, and a new duty on tea, higher in proportion to its raised value in the new book of rates. This continued till the 7th of the King, when, instead of a duty *ad valorem*, it was enacted that a duty of 4d. per pound on the black, and 6d. per pound on the green should be levied. The duty on the whole might amount to 10,000l. but it was enacted that 7,300l. should be the hereditary portion due to the Crown. This was done without the Crown having signified any consent to Parliament. Tobacco and tea were thus the only two articles from which the hereditary revenue was supposed to arise; and in order that the hereditary part of the revenue might not be affected, a permanent rate had been fixed, so that any deficiency might be made up to the Crown, and that the surplus, when any, might be applied to the public service. These annual duties, the right hon. gent. further insisted, had even been continued three different times since the union, without any intimation from the crown. The right hon. gent. (Mr. Foster) who had managed those revenues, which were now entrusted to him, would feel, he flattered himself, the justice of what he had said. His recollection and greater experience would enable him even to corroborate more strongly his statement. But not only were the precedents of the Parliament of Ireland in favour of his mode of procedure, but those of the British Parliament also, in relation to the same subject. A case perfectly the same had occurred in the 37th of the King, in regard to the consolidated fund, when it was enacted that a certain fixed sum should belong to the Crown, and that the surplus should go to the public service. The consent of the Crown on this occasion was not asked, nor was such a previous step deemed necessary to enable Parliament to proceed.—Should any gent. however, be disposed to attribute this circumstance to want of attention in the House, and still insist that it was a step previously necessary to obtain his Majesty's consent, he would by no means resist the proposition, nor could he have any objection to consult the Crown on a subject of this nature.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* was of opinion, that his right hon. friend was sufficiently justified by the precedents he had adduced in his behalf. He had at any rate given the House an opportunity to investigate the proper mode of proceeding. For his own part, he was perfectly satisfied, at the same time, that should the Crown withhold its consent from such a measure, no precedents whatever could justify the House in their farther proceeding where the interests of the Crown were in any degree affected. But this consent might be given or withheld at any stage of the bill. It could not be learned from the title of the bill that the interests of the Crown are concerned. It was from the statement of the right hon. gent. only, that he had learned that the Crown was concerned in the present bill; and having learned this, he had applied to his Majesty, and had authority to say, that his Majesty gave his consent in the most ample manner.

Mr. Foster stated, that the duties on tea and tobacco were far from being prominent objects in his mind when he had started the objection. It was the interests of the Crown in general he had considered, and those not only as they related to the life of his present Majesty, but as they affected his successor.

Mr. Rose said, that the House might perhaps not be aware of what was the proper mode of procedure on such an occasion, but it was certainly much obliged to the right hon. gent. for his objections on a former evening, as it had led to an application to his Majesty, the result of which was so agreeable to the House. The question certainly was not in regard to the amount to which the Crown might be interested, but in regard to the principle. It was quite indifferent whether it was 500 or 5,000, but whether the measure was constitutional. It was unconstitutional, he thought, that any alteration should take place in the fixed revenues without a message from the Crown. Whatever may have been the practice of the Irish Parliament, such a proceeding was certainly contrary to the practice of the British Parliament. The House may perhaps be satisfied with this method of getting information of the consent of the Crown, but he wished it to be understood, that in his opinion, it was by no means the usual way, and that nothing less than a message was constitutional.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* was willing to appeal to the House, if a message was at all necessary on such an occasion. Many instances such as this had occurred on grants, and on Committees of Supply, where

the Crown was interested, and where the consent was not deemed previously necessary. But so far as the interest of the Crown was concerned, he again repeated, that the consent in question was fully given.

Mr. *Rose* again begged leave to say, that in regard to the consolidation of the duties in 1797, the interests of the Crown were perfectly safe, and that the cases were not quite analogous,

Mr. *G. Ponsonby* was surprised that on this bill no communication from the Crown should be thought necessary. When a bill of nearly the same nature passed in Ireland in the year 1793, a message had been received from the Lord Lieut., and that message ordered to be ingrossed in the books previous to any proceedings of Parliament.

Mr. *Ormsby* begged to remind the House that in the 34th of the King, an act passed of nearly the same nature, without any message whatever from the Crown.

Mr. *Vansittart* stated that his principal motive in rising was only to say in regard to the hereditary interest of the Crown, that the act of the 30th of George II. was passed without any notice from the Crown.

Mr. *Foster* was of opinion that, even if his present Majesty should be satisfied, it was necessary also that he should intimate his approbation and consent as far as respected his successor, or the interests of the Crown at large.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* begged leave explicitly to state, that his Majesty had given the fullest consent, not only in regard to himself, but as it respected also the general interests of the Crown; but at the same time he wished to state, that his Majesty did not mean that the House should be fettered in the smallest degree in their discussions.—The question was agreed to.—The House having resolved into the Committee,

Mr. *Foster* rose, and objected to the mode of proceeding which the framers of this measure recommended, as it went to render taxes permanent which had been heretofore but annually voted. This was in his mind taking the Irish nation by surprise, from which he was confident that a number of petitions would be immediately presented, if the merchants were aware of the nature of the bill and the additional taxes which it proposed to impose, particularly on linen, salt, hops, &c. He thought the measure of perpetuating the taxes objectionable, as involving an invasion of the rights of his Majesty's successor also in point of time, as the period was so rapidly approaching when, from the relative state of the debts of the two countries a total revision of the taxes would

become necessary. The right hon. gent. concluded with moving an amendment, "that the period for the continuance of those taxes should be fixed for the 25th of March, 1805."

Mr. *Corry* observed, that to all which the right hon. gent. advanced, he had already made, in his judgment, quite a sufficient reply; and, therefore, as often as such arguments were repeated, he must be under the necessity of troubling the House with a repetition of his former answer, thus imitating the conduct of a right hon. gent. who, when any motion or speech was made against the American war, always said, that he would read his American speech, which contained arguments to his mind of the policy of that war, arguments which appeared to him to require no addition. The right hon. gent. proceeded to state the superior advantages which the linen manufacturers had over the manufacturers of this country, every article belonging to that manufacture, except flax, being subject to a tax in this country, while all the same articles, namely, pot ash, barrilla, train oil, &c. were exempt from taxation in Ireland. He complained of the species of observation used by the mover of the amendment, as calculated to mislead and inflame the public mind with respect to the amount of taxes which were necessary in order to protect the very existence of the country.

Mr. *Burroughs* agreed with the right hon. gent. who moved the amendment, as to the propriety of allowing time to the Irish merchants, and other persons interested, to inquire into and communicate their opinions upon the different taxes. This was the more necessary as the schedule of those taxes was only printed and delivered on Tuesday last since when even the members of that House had scarce had time to examine it. With the general principle laid down by the right, hon. gent. on the Treasury Bench, as to the justice of equal taxation upon the same manufactures of both countries, he did not mean to dispute; but as it appeared to him the question to consider was, how far the peculiar state of the manufacture in each country would justify the House in acting upon such principle; and here it was material to be recollected that linen was the staple trade of Ireland.

Mr. *Corry* said, that the schedule of the taxes laid before Parliament last session was very generally circulated among the merchants in Ireland; but he was ready to admit that there was some difference between that and the schedule now before the Committee.

Lord Castlereagh recommended, that time should be taken to examine and compare the schedule now before the Committee with that of last year, which his right hon. Friend had stated to have been circulated among the persons interested in the taxes referred to; and if any substantial difference should be found to exist he was sure that his hon. friend would be as willing as any member of the House, to press the adoption of the bill until the Irish merchants should have full opportunity to canvass the merits, and to state their opinions upon every part of the schedule; at the same time he begged to call to the recollection of gentlemen, that 3 years had now nearly elapsed since it was known to be in contemplation to render those taxes perpetual, that is to say, to assimilate the concerns of the Irish revenue to the practice which prevailed in this country, and to the soundness of the principle, he conceived, that no objection could be offered, for either the proposed annual review of those taxes must be a mere parade, or the public creditor must be, in a great measure, insecure. The noble lord then moved, that the chairman should be directed to report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Mr. G. Ponsonby expressed his hope that that postponement was a prelude to the abandonment altogether of this obnoxious plan of taxation.

Mr. Fox said, that if it was intended to render those taxes perpetual, notwithstanding all that had been urged to the contrary, the House might as well come to a vote on the subject this night; but if the proposed delay was merely a temporary retreat, from a consideration that it would be more decorous to give apparent time for the consideration of the schedule, and that the time of the House was meant to be again occupied with the same discussion, he could not forbear to condemn such an expedient.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer observed, that no gent. was entitled to assume from any thing that had fallen from his noble friend, that it was at all intended to abandon the proposed assimilation of the mode of taxation in Ireland, with that which existed in this country. The only delay proposed in the progress of the measure was until to-morrow, and the only motive of that delay was to give an opportunity to his right hon. friend (Mr. Corry), to compare the two schedules for the purpose described by his noble friend.

Mr. John Latouche pressed strongly for further time, from a sense of duty to a great proportion of his constituents, the merchants of Dublin, who were particularly interested,

and whose opinion ought to be consulted before such a bill was suffered to pass the House. The motion was agreed to, that the Chairman should report progress, and ask leave to sit again to-morrow. The House resumed, and the Chairman obtained leave accordingly.

[VOLUNTEER CONSOLIDATION BILL.] Mr. Secretary Yorke moved, that this bill be re-committed. The right hon. gent. proposed several verbal amendments, which were agreed to. On the clause for allowing commanding officers of corps to discharge men for certain specified clauses, Mr. Secretary York proposed, that after these specifications these words should be added, "or for other good causes" The right hon. gent. observed, that this power of dismissal is only to belong to volunteer officers while in a disembodied state, but that when they shall be called into actual service, their commanders shall have only the same power which belongs to the colonels of regular regiments. He proposed that in case any volunteer shall be aggrieved by unjust dismissal, he shall have the power of appeal to his Majesty, with whom it shall rest, if sufficient grounds appear, to order a court of inquiry to be summoned on the case by the lord lieutenant of the county in which the corps of the appellant may reside, and upon the result of such inquiry shall depend the confirmation or rejection of the dismissed volunteer; the lord lieutenant to have the reinstating the man in his corps, if the judgment of the court of inquiry should be in favour, and also the power if he see fit to remove the officer, the latter subjected to his Majesty's approbation.

Mr. Fox renewed his objection to this clause, as conferring too great a power upon the commanders of volunteer corps, by enabling them in effect to press men into the militia or army of reserve, for the most trifling cause. The idea of a vindictive court of inquiry, to be obtained by the means proposed, he considered as not at all a sufficient protection to the volunteers against the abuse of this extraordinary power. The dismissal ought, in his judgment, to be preceded rather than followed by a court of inquiry.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer argued that the power which the clause proposed to confer was great, but he contended that the court of inquiry, described by his right hon. friend, would be a sufficient check upon the exercise of that power.

Mr. Ward thought that the amendment of "other good causes," rendered the specifications which preceded them altogether superfluous.

Lord Castlereagh considered the mode of appeal proposed the best that offered. As to the principle of allowing commanding officers of volunteer corps, the power of discharging their men, the colonels of all the regiments in the army had a similar power, and it was essential to military discipline that such a power should be vested in them. If a volunteer commander should discharge a man without just reason, such man could have his redress.

Mr. Fox begged to set the noble Lord right. The colonels of regiments had not the power of their own sole will, to discharge their men without any previous trial or court of inquiry; at least it was a power that was never known to be exercised. The clause before the Committee, therefore, proposed to confer a power on volunteer commanders far exceeding that possessed by any other description of officers. He argued that a volunteer commander should be obliged to state his reasons for discharging a man, or otherwise the mode of appeal proposed against the abuse of his power, would be quite impracticable. He ridiculed the idea of declining, from the pretext of humanity, to make it imperative on those commanders to state their reasons for dismissing any volunteer.

General Loftus said, that in the course of his service he had never known an instance of a colonel of any regiment discharging a man from the service on his own authority solely, as the noble Lord on the treasury bench asserted.

Mr. Pitt suggested that an appeal to the lord lieut. for a court of inquiry upon any discharge might be allowed, provided the discharge were for any other cause than those specified in the clause, namely, for badness of character, for instance, which was a good ground for discharging a man, although it would be proper, in such a case, to oblige the commanding officer publicly to state it as the reason. The mode of appeal supplied in the amendment of the right hon. gent. he considered nugatory and objectionable in principle.

Mr. Grey proposed an amendment that after the words "that it shall be lawful for such commanding officer," these words be inserted, "to summon a Board of Inquiry, who shall determine on the propriety of dismissing such volunteer, &c."

Mr. Secretary Yorke opposed it. He admitted that the power conferred by the clause would be great; but yet it was to be considered that this was a great power to supply the place of many other great powers. This power, however, he begged to observe,

was not severe. It was exercised during the last war among the volunteers, although it now excited so much objection.

Mr. Grey admitted that the power was not new, but yet it was to be recollected that the consequence that would result from the exercise of that power was quite new, and might be productive of serious inconveniences to individuals.—After several other observations, the question was called for, and on a division there appeared,

For the original clause 116

Against it 69—Majority 47

Mr. Pitt's clause for levying a fine not exceeding the sum of 5s. on those who may be guilty of non-attendance or misbehaviour during the time of their corps being under arms, or 1s. penalty if the party be exempt from the payment of the poor's rates, was after some discussion, rejected without a division.

Mr. Secretary Yorke said that he had not any other clause to propose; he meant only to move that the report be now received pro forma; and he should afterwards move, that the bill be taken into further consideration on Friday.—The House then resumed, the report was then brought up, ordered to be printed, and taken into further consideration on Friday next.

[NAVAL INQUIRY.]—Mr. Secretary Yorke wished the right hon. gent. (Mr. Pitt) would have the goodness to state to the House what were the papers which he intended to move for, in order that the object of the motion might be clearly understood.

Mr. Pitt declared that he had no objection to gratify the desire of the right hon. Secretary in that respect. He said he had indeed already communicated the substance of his motion to one of the Lords of the Admiralty, from whom he thought ministers might probably have heard it. It was his intention to move for an account of the number of that description of force which is best calculated to repel the attacks of the enemy at the present moment, that we have now in commission, he meant frigates, sloops, cutters, and all the smaller description of armed vessels which were capable of sailing in shallow water, and defending our coast. He meant also to move for an account of a similar nature, with respect to that species of force in the year 1801, with a view of comparing them together. He should also move for an account of the naval force of the country of another description, namely, ships of the line, which we had in commission in the year 1793, and in the year 1801. and also the amount of those which had been launched since that

period, or which may have been laid down or building in his Majesty's dock-yards. The number of seamen which were employed in his Majesty's navy at those different periods should also be an object of his motion. Upon the whole, as it was his wish to have every information which could lead to a fair comparison of the state of our naval defence at different times and under different circumstances, he could not positively say that it might not possibly branch out to other heads than those which he had already stated.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, March 13.

[**BOYDELL'S LOTTERY.**—On the motion for the first reading of Boydell's Lottery Bill,

The Earl of *Suffolk* rose, not, he said, to oppose the bill, but he could not pass by the opportunity which it afforded him of warning the artists of this country of the great injury which they were doing, both to their own character and interest, and to the interests of the country, by the slovenly manner in which most of the works of art in this country were now executed. He stated it to be a fact, that in consequence of the very superior execution of the print of the death of Captain Cook, by Woollett, and of the Battle of La Hogue, English engravings had risen to a high reputation on the Continent. So much was this the case, that for the former of these engravings, Woollett received between 6,000*l.* and 7,000*l.* and the revenue coming into this country from this branch of art, at one time exceeded 200,000*l.* per annum. By the slovenly manner, however, in which works of this kind were now executed, both the individual and public advantages had ceased to operate. He did not mean to apply the doctrine which he had now laid to the gentlemen concerned in the present bill. Their conduct and exertions, he was ready to confess, had been highly meritorious.

The Lord Chancellor said, that however much he might disapprove of the practice of granting privileges similar to those contained in the present bill, for the disposal of private property, he, for one, and he was convinced every man who heard him, would agree in thinking that the conferring such a privilege on the Messrs. Boydell's was no more than a tribute justly due to them from their country, in which they had been the principal instruments of improving, if not of establishing the arts of painting and engraving. He was not prepared to say, that

the noble earl was unfounded in his general observations. He thought, however, that part of the falling off in the demand for British works of art on the Continent, might be ascribed, without injustice, to that spirit which characterised a particular country, of wishing to lay their hands on every valuable piece of art gratis, rather than for payment.—The bill was then read a first time.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday March 13.

[**MINUTES.**—Two Committees were appointed, the one to examine into the accounts of clothing, &c. for the militia in Great-Britain, and the other for a similar purpose, with regard to the Irish militia.—On the motion of Mr. Corry, it was ordered, that the Speaker do issue his warrant, empowering the clerk of the Crown to make out a new writ for the election of a member to represent the City of Dublin in Parliament, in the room of J. C. Beresford, Esq. who has accepted of the office of Escheator of Ulster. A petition was presented from a number of the inhabitants of the county of Norfolk, complaining of the operation of the late duties upon malt. Ordered to lie on the table.—A person from the Stamp Office presented an account of the sums of money in the hands of the distributors of stamps on the 25th January, 1804. Ordered to lie on the table.—A Committee was appointed to examine into the statement of the amount of monies paid to adjutants and serjeant-majors of the militia, during the time of their being disembodied.—The American Importation Indemnity Bill was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time.—The Irish Malt Duty Bill was committed, and ordered to be reported tomorrow.—Mr. Hawkins Browne, presented a petition from the executors of James Wright, Esq., late Governor of Georgia, praying for a remuneration for the losses he had sustained in that province. The Chancellor of the Exchequer stated, that he was empowered to communicate his Majesty's assent to the reception of the petition; but at the same time he would not pledge himself to any approbation or support of the matter which was contained in it. He then moved that a Committee be appointed to examine into the merits of the petition. Ordered.—The Chancellor of the Exchequer moved, pursuant to notice, for a Committee to inquire into the propriety of making any and what difference in the duty to be laid on barley and big, the growth of Scotland, and

that on the same sort of grain in England. He stated the different alterations which had taken place in the duties of those species of grain in Scotland, from the time of the union with Scotland to the present period. He wished the question to be fairly investigated, and would not, therefore, prejudge it even so far as to state any opinion on the subject, but content himself with moving for a Committee to inquire into the subject. A Committee was appointed and ordered to sit for that purpose.—The Chancellor of the Exchequer observed, that he saw mention made in the Journals of different petitions which had been presented to that hon. House against the late duties on malt. As it was his wish that every class of his Majesty's subjects should obtain redress, if any grievance could be found to exist, he gave notice, that after the Easter recess he would move for a Committee to inquire into the subject matter of those petitions.—On the report of the Committee being read, leave was granted to bring in a bill to authorise his Majesty's ministers to raise two millions by way of loan on Exchequer Bills, towards the service of the current year.—The House went into a Committee on the Irish Countervailing Duties, and the report was ordered to be received to-morrow.

[*IRISH DUTIES BILL.*—Mr. Corry moved that the House resolve itself into a Committee on the above bill. On the question being put from the chair,

Sir John Newport returned the right hon. member the most sincere thanks, both on his part, and in the name of his constituents, who had desired him so to do, for the very liberal manner in which he had attended to their interest, and made them acquainted with the different duties which were to be in any manner altered by the bill. In other parts of Ireland, however, the commercial men were acquainted with the true object of the bill. He therefore hoped, that so much attention would be paid to the doubts, or even the prejudices, of so respectable a body of men, as not to make the duties permanent in the present session of Parliament.

Mr. Corry expressed the greatest degree of pleasure in having the testimony of the worthy baronet and of the merchants of so respectable a place as Waterford, in favour of his conduct. There were other places also of the first respectability in that part of the United Kingdom which he thought had nearly an equal right to be pleased with the conduct of his Majesty's ministers towards them; in the City of Cork, he knew that there was at present some difference of opinion with regard to the operation of the bill,

but the opposition was there so slight that he thought a very little reflection or explanation on the subject would reconcile the commercial people of that city. The merchants of the city of Dublin, indeed, were a body of men possessing as strict honour as any persons in the world, and whose capital was as great as that of any other class of his Majesty's subjects in proportion to the trade of the country. They had objected to 38 of the duties which were to be imposed by the present bill, and government had conceded in a great measure to their wishes. There were only 4 of the 38 articles of taxation which remained unaltered according to their wishes; 1. foreign herrings imported; 2. foreign oil; that, however, was something lowered, though not in proportion equal to their wishes; 3. foreign hops imported in Ireland. These three were continued to be taxed nearly to the same amount as ministers had at first proposed, merely for encouragement of the British trade and British fishery in preference to the commerce of a foreign country. As to the 4th article, which had not been attended to, it had been so frequently discussed, that he would only say that it was incompatible with the general policy of the empire that such a measure as that of taking off all the duties on the exports of Ireland should ever be adopted. But in order, if possible, to reconcile the different commercial bodies of men throughout all Ireland to the adoption of the present measure, he would, in the Committee, move for the addition of a clause, limiting the duration of the act to one year. On account of the absence of a great number of representatives of different parts of Ireland on their military duty at this period of the year, perhaps it might be thought expedient to continue some of the duties for 5 quarters instead of 4 as before the expiration of that time it might probably be in their power to attend in Parliament.

Mr. Foster stated the inconvenience which was likely to result from such an alteration in the mode of collecting the duties in Ireland.

Mr. Corry then said, that he should not consider that he acted improperly in moving to have those duties renewed at the end of the year, for 3 months, before they were made permanent, if there was not a sufficient number of members present from that part of the United Kingdom to which the bill referred.—The House having resolved itself into a Committee. Mr. Foster suggested that it would be more regular if the act was to continue in force beyond the term of the year, though the duties might be voted only

for the year. It was, however, agreed by the House, that the act should continue to the 25th March, 1805. The House having resumed, the report was brought up, and ordered to be received to-morrow.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Wednesday, March 14.

Counsel were heard in continuation relative to the Scotch appeal, the Duke of Queensberry *v.* M'Murdo, namely, Mr. Attorney General, as leading counsel for the respondent, at considerable length, after which their lordships adjourned the farther hearing of the case till this day se'nnight.—The bills before the House were forwarded in their several stages.—Mr. Alcock, from the treasury, presented an account of the monies issued by the treasury, for the service of the year 1803, with a statement of the disposition thereof.—When the accounts were laid on the table, the Earl of Suffolk observed, that he should have to call their lordships' attention to certain parts of them; perhaps to some parts connected with the military branch; but certainly to the expenditure of the barrack department, which he conceived to be enormous. There were already, he believed, expended on these buildings more than two millions of money, and before the erections, now carrying on, were completed, an additional million must be expended. He should think it his duty to call the attention of the House to this part of the accounts before them, and in order to enable him to do that the more effectually, he moved that the accounts in question be printed. No objection being made to this proposal, it was ordered accordingly.—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, March 14.

[MINUTES.]—Mr. Cartwright moved for leave to bring in a bill for the regulation of chimney sweepers. Leave given.—Lord Marsham reported from the Middlesex election committee, that Mr. Atkins Wright had not been able to attend the said committee. Mr. Atkins Wright was, after examining Sir James Earle, excused from attending.—On the motion of Mr. Hurst, John Wilson was brought to the bar of the House, where the Speaker addressed him, and after expatiating on the enormity of his offence, in being the prime mover of the scandalous scenes acted at Aylesbury, which tended to violate the right of election, and the privileges of that House, and in prevaricating in

his evidence before the Aylesbury election committee, informed him that the House now deeming itself satisfied, had ordered him to be discharged on paying his fee.—Mr. Hurst then moved, that the reprimand delivered by the Speaker, should be entered on the journals. Ordered nem. con.—Mr. Corry brought up the reports of the Irish duties bill, and the Irish malt duty bill, which were severally agreed to, and the bills ordered to be read a third time to-morrow.—The neutral ships bill was read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.—Mr. Vansittart brought up the vote of credit bill, which was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.—Mr. Secretary Yorke, after observing that some inconvenience had arisen respecting an act passed last session relative to the Irish militia, it having been passed at a late period of the session, and not reaching Ireland till October, when several men had been already enrolled under the supposition that the provisions would be the same as those of 1797, he therefore thought it necessary to move for leave to bring in a bill to amend the said act. Leave given.

[PROPERTY TAX.]—Mr. Gregor wished to be informed what progress had been made with respect to the property tax, and for that purpose intended to move for an account of the assessments returned to the tax-office; if, however, there was any objection he should merely give notice of it for a future day. He also intended to move for an account of the sums paid into, and of the charges upon the consolidated fund, between the 5th of Jan. 1803, and the 5th of January, 1804, distinguishing each quarter. There was another circumstance on which he wished to make a remark, relative to the printing of accounts laid before the House; it frequently happened, from only one copy of an account being laid before the House, which was immediately sent to be printed, that the members were, in the meantime, deprived of all information upon the subject. He concluded by moving for the account he had alluded to respecting the consolidated fund.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he saw no objection to the motion; but with respect to the other motion which the hon. gent. had mentioned, relative to the property tax, although he was not aware of any objection, yet he wished to avail himself of the hon. gentleman's wish to give a notice for a future day.—The motion was then agreed to, and Mr. Gregor gave notice of his intention to bring forward the other motion on Monday.

The *Speaker* observed, with respect to accounts laid upon the table, that it would be for the convenience of the House if duplicates from the different offices were presented, in order that members might obtain information upon the subjects of these accounts whilst they were printing.

[WAR IN CEYLON.]—Mr. Creevey.—I now rise, Sir, in pursuance of the notice I gave some time since, to move for certain papers and documents for the purpose of information, and as grounds for further inquiry respecting the war which the King's government in Ceylon had lately been carrying on in that island. I should not have presumed, Sir, to take upon myself the office of calling the attention of the House to this subject, had it not appeared to me of a very limited nature, and one lying within a very narrow compass, or had I perceived a disposition in any other gentleman to do the same thing. As the subject, however, now, Sir, has been some time before the public, as it appears to me to be one of the greatest importance, as no gentleman has appeared disposed to take it up, and as his Majesty's ministers have not thought fit to give this House any information respecting it, I have thought it my duty to introduce it to the consideration of Parliament. As the House and the Public are not in possession of any official account of the course or origin of this war, of many of the transactions which took place in the course of it, and of many of its effects and consequences, I will shortly state to the House such leading particulars as, from the information I am in possession of, I believe to be true. I am certain they are mostly true, and where I am incorrect the papers I shall move for will set me right.—From the year 1795, when we first took the island of Ceylon from the Dutch, to the end of 1802, our government in Ceylon seems to have pursued its proper objects, to have confined itself to the possession of the coast and open countries of the island, to the introduction of wholesome laws and civilisation amongst the natives who live under our government, and every thing, I believe, during the period I have mentioned bore the strongest and most flattering prospect of improvement. We had never apparently, during this period, entertained the dangerous policy of interfering with the unprofitable interior of Ceylon, the woods and mountains, and wild inhabitants of the King of Candy's dominions. Some time, however, in 1802, it seems some subjects of the British government had purchased, in Candia, a quantity of the Areka nut, and which, in its way to our settlements,

was seized by officers of the Candian government. I have heard that such contracts by Candian subjects are against the laws of that country; but, be that as it may, our government claimed the property, and it was agreed to be restored, or the value to be paid for it—the value, I believe, was 300*l.*; certainly not more, and the first difference between the English and the Candian governments was, whether this sum of 300*l.* should be paid instantly or at the expiration of a few months; the real cause, therefore, of the war which was about to take place, was the difference between the prompt and protracted payment of 300*l.* It was in this transaction that our national honour was supposed to be involved, for this our government left its useful occupation, and put all the troops in Ceylon in motion to chastise the King of Candy, to invade his dominions, and seize his capital. It is, perhaps, necessary for me here to state, that the King of Candy's dominions are composed principally of woods and mountains, affording no possible object for any rational enterprise, situated in a climate the most fatal to Europeans, and that his capital is in the heart of his dominions. Some time in January, 1803, this war began, and in a very short time, and scarcely with the loss of ten men killed in battle, we penetrated as far as Candy, which we took, and found the King was fled; so far we were all successful, but then, Sir, came, what our government of Ceylon knew must come, that dreadful malady the jungle fever, that for ever infests the interior of Ceylon, and for ever destroys the inhabitants of Europe. This fever, Sir, upon this occasion, destroyed hundreds upon hundreds of our troops in Candia; of the 51st regiment alone above 300 perished, of the 19th regiment 170, besides the 200 of the same regiment who were afterwards murdered. One should have thought, Sir, as we had thus displayed our power by the seizure of the King of Candy's capital, and putting the King to flight, as we had paid so dearly for it in the death of our soldiers, and as the country presented no object worthy of our possession, that our government would have instantly withdrawn the surviving troops; but it seems, Sir, our governor was determined to play a great part in the politics of the Candian government—for this purpose he left a garrison in Candy to secure success to our intrigues, and from this most ridiculous and contemptible interference of ours in the affairs of Candy, come all the dreadful and disastrous consequences we since have heard of. We first dethroned the reigning monarch, and put upon his

throne a new king of our own choice, a person so unskilfully selected for that purpose, so universally odious to the Candians, that we finally withdrew him, and he has since been murdered on account of our partiality to him and his own presumption. We then, Sir, resolved upon changing the Candian monarchy into an aristocracy, and we guaranteed a form of government of this species, and put the first adigar, or first minister at the head of it. During all this time, Sir, the garrison of Candy were daily diminished and enfeebled by death and sickness; there were only left of British troops, the 19th regiment reduced to 200 men, and a Malay regiment; the House will know how to appreciate the climate of Candy when I state to them, that of the 200 of the 19th regiment, 160 were sick in their cots and perfectly disabled. At this period, Sir, the town of Candy was surrounded, I have heard, by 20,000 Candians—certainly, I believe, by not less than 10,000. Our troops cut off from all provisions, reduced by death and sickness as I have mentioned, and the Malay regiment beginning to desert, surrendered, and laid down their arms. The termination of this dreadful tragedy we all know; upwards of twenty British officers, with the 200 unfortunate troops of the 19th regiment were led out two by two in the streets of Candy, and there, by the orders of the very adigar we had guaranteed in his government, they were knocked on the head, and had their throats cut, and this not even with the exception of the 160 sick men of the 19th, who were dragged from their cots and murdered. About the same period all our fortresses in Candia were attacked, all the garrisons compelled to evacuate them, and all the sick in those fortresses were left and murdered. Thus ended, Sir, our invasion of Candia; it began in January, and before the end of June our invading army was all either expelled, had died, or were murdered. From the date of the event I have just alluded to, the destruction of our garrison in Candia, to the latest accounts I have seen, which are dated in September last, the situation of the island became every day more alarming; the Candians elated with the expulsion and destruction of the British had, in immense numbers, invaded our settlements from one end of the island to the other, and, according to the latest accounts, had left us nothing but our forts. The natives or coolies who live under our dominion, men of the most ferocious natures, encouraged by the example and successes of the Candians, were beginning to display the most alarming spirit of disaffec-

tion to us; such of the King's troops as remained alive were still under the influence of the diseases they had contracted in the Candian expedition; and, in short, such was supposed to be the danger of the colony on the continent of India as well as at Ceylon, that in the beginning of September, an expedition was fitting out at Calcutta for its immediate assistance. The latest letter that I have seen on this subject is of the 15th of September, and is from Madras; the writer of it states, as a most extraordinary circumstance, that no tidings from Columbo have been received since the 4th, and from this and from other circumstances I have stated, expresses the most serious apprehensions for the safety of the island. Now, Sir, if this statement be correct, (and I am sure in most parts that it is so) it is, I think, a little extraordinary, that his Majesty's ministers should never have communicated a single syllable of information to Parliament upon a subject of so much importance; I apprehend the facts I have stated are perfectly sufficient to induce Parliament to call upon ministers for the most full and minute particulars respecting a war apparently so rash and so impolitic, apparently so destitute of all advantage, and so evidently fatal and disastrous in its effects; it is the duty of Parliament at all times to examine into and ascertain the objects for which the brave defenders of our country are sacrificed, and it is more peculiarly the duty and the interest of Parliament to do so at this present time. There are, Sir, likewise, circumstances connected with this war, and consequences arising out of it, that more imperiously call upon us to inquire into the conduct of the governor, and which I will briefly state to the House. When we first took possession of Ceylon it was not the least of our advantages, that we took with it all the experience of the preceding settlers, the Dutch. The Dutch had made this particular experiment of subduing the Candians over and over again, they had, twice, with as little loss as ourselves, seized the capital and expelled the King, but on every occasion their army was finally destroyed by the same causes which have destroyed ours. It is singular, Sir, that on one occasion the precise calamity which has lately befallen our garrison at Candia befell the Dutch. The Dutch garrison at Candia were compelled to capitulate, and, on their march, and within two days journey of Columbo were, to the amount of 400 men, all murdered. The effect of these experiments upon the Dutch was to convince them, that all attempts upon the interior of Candia were not only

fruitless, but fatal to themselves; and, accordingly, for the last twenty years of their settlement in that island, such projects were never again repeated. The present governor of Ceylon was in possession of these facts, and of this experience, before he doomed our soldiers to such inevitable destruction; they are recorded in a very valuable and interesting account of Ceylon, written by an officer of the army we first sent there, and the materials for which history were collected under the immediate eye of the governor. I wish, Sir, the writer of that history had been more correctly prophetic, when he says, "our government will, doubtless, avoid the errors of former European masters of Ceylon, who wasted, unprofitably, in vain attempts to subdue the natives, that time and those resources which might have rendered this island one of the most valuable colonies in the world." With respect to the consequences of this war (independent of the unprofitable termination of it, and the mortification we must feel at having our brave troops apparently so idly sacrificed) they are really, Sir, of the most alarming nature. I need scarcely remind the House of the contiguity of Ceylon to the continent of India. India is allowed to be the great object of French ambition; we act upon this supposition in all our political calculations; it is with reference to this that Ceylon derives its greatest importance as a conquest; it is with reference to India that the harbour of Trincomale is beyond all value; and yet, Sir, with a war carrying on in India on an enormous scale, with a French squadron in the Indian seas full of troops, so often said to be captured, but still unaccounted for, with the French ports full of vessels and troops ready for expeditions, with a necessity at home for our regular army, more urgent than was ever known, and with that regular army more than ever neglected, we are placed in the distressing dilemma, that we must either, by withholding assistance from the government of Ceylon, endanger our possession of that most important colony, or we must, in this hour of need and necessity, deprive ourselves of a part of our most valuable and most rare species of defence. I am informed, Sir, that 1,000 troops of the line are now embarking, or have embarked already, for Ceylon. I am sure such supply is necessary for the security of the colony; but I ask the House if they will permit the country to make so important a sacrifice without a full and most minute enquiry into what has caused the necessity for so unfortunate a measure. Sir, there is another most dreadful consequence

of this war; after the little discretion our government has hitherto shewn in going to war for apparently so trifling an object, I am afraid when the passions and resentment of our countrymen are roused by the recollection of what has lately passed at Candy, I am afraid that any prospect of peace with these Candians is very remote. I am afraid we are doomed to an internal war with this race of people, and that Ceylon, instead of being the valuable acquisition it is so naturally made for, will prove only to be the grave of our armies. I do hope, Sir, that ministers in their despatches to the governor will not fail to remind and to press upon him the past experience of this island; I hope, Sir, they will remind him of that great lesson for all Europeans, the late fate of St. Domingo. As long, Sir, as the natives of Candia or St. Domingo shall possess the local advantages they now do, as long as the inhabitants of Europe shall be subject to the diseases they now are, I believe, Sir, that all our attempts to subdue the natives of these countries must prove not only fruitless, but fatal to ourselves. I think, Sir, if this war shall appear to have been as rank and impolitic in its origin and commencement, and as calamitous in its consequences as I have stated it to be, I think the opinion of this House will be, that there is abundant matter for enquiry into this subject. There are too, Sir, transactions of this war that I have touched upon before, which I apprehend the House must likewise think call for particular enquiry; I allude to our interference in the politics of Candy; to our dethroning and making of princes and new forms of government in that country. If, Sir, we are really in earnest when we profess our respect for established governments, and our abhorrence of all usurpations; if we really wish for any character of consistency in the eyes of Europe, upon this important subject, it is high time that we bestow some criticism upon the very singular transactions of our colonial governors. I am not aware, Sir, of any other reasons I can adduce in support of the enquiry I wish to be instituted; but, before I conclude, Sir, I beg to advert to a very cruel and unfeeling account that has lately been published by his Majesty's ministers, purporting to be a despatch from the government of Ceylon, and giving an account of the murder of our garrison at Candy. This letter, Sir, is an attempt to account for the final disasters of this war, and which rest entirely with the governor by insinuations the most fatal to the honour and character of a British officer who has fought and who has perished in the service of his country; and

this, Sir, in the absence of any species of testimony on which such institution could be founded. I do intreat this house, on behalf of the character of this most unfortunate officer, to recollect how he was situated:—there were only 200 British troops, 160 of those were sick in their beds; the remaining 40, I presume, were not very healthy, they were surrounded by at least 10,000 Candians, they were cut off from provisions, and they were 60 miles from our nearest settlement: in this situation they were ordered by our new ally, the first Adigar to lay down their arms, and they were deserted by the Malays in our service. Does any man believe it to be physically possible that these 40 men, so unhappily circumstanced, could have cut their way through all these difficulties? Of this, at least, we may be certain, that had they attempted so to do, the 160 who were sick would have been murdered. I contend, then, that if in the absence of all testimony respecting the conduct of this unfortunate officer, we allow ourselves to speculate upon his motives, we are bound in fairness to believe, that he was influenced by a very natural and generous sympathy for this great majority of his sick and helpless fellow soldiers, and that in acting as he did, he consulted what he conceived to be the best, not only for himself alone, but for the whole garrison of Candy.—Mr. Creevey concluded by moving for “Copies of all papers, letters and despatches, from his Majesty’s governor of Ceylon to the government of Candia in that island, and from the Candian government to his Majesty’s governor respecting the cause or origin of the war in Ceylon: 2. Copies of all correspondence between his Majesty’s governor of Ceylon and officers commanding his majesty’s troops in that island during the war in Ceylon: 3. Copies of all treaties entered into between his Majesty’s governor of Ceylon and the Candian government: 4. All the returns of his Majesty’s forces in Ceylon, from the first of January, 1803, to the present time.”—On the first motion being put,

Lord Castlereagh said, he should trouble the House with as few words as possible, as when the papers were laid before the House, they would then have an opportunity of forming an opinion upon the subject. He assented to the general principle, that when a war was entered into in any part of our colonial possessions, unless govt. could state some reason of expediency for not producing such information, that Parliament had a right to possess itself of full information with respect to the origin and causes of that war. To this point the

present motion went, and so far he had no objection; but he should certainly object to any motion which went to produce information as to the state of our force in Ceylon, as that would be shewing the enemy the number of troops we had in the island to defend it, and might tend to invite an attack. It might be also inexpedient to disclose the state of any negotiation carrying on in the island by the governor. He only wished that no prejudicial impression might remain in the minds of gentlemen. The hon. gent. Mr. (Creevey) had stated the war to have originated in a dispute about property to the amount of only 300*l.* but the value was of little consequence; the Candian gov. had long demonstrated an hostile mind towards us, and the detention of property, about which the first dispute took place, was only one of the symptoms of that hostile disposition. The form of the motion was, he said, not accurate, as Ceylon formed no part of the dominions of the East India Company, but was annexed to the Crown; he had, therefore, framed a motion which he would make, if the hon. gent. would consent to withdraw his. He concluded by reading his motion, “that an humble address be presented to his Majesty, praying that his Majesty would be graciously pleased to order to be laid before the House, copies or extracts of such letters, and papers as had been received from the hon. Frederick North, governor of Ceylon, relative to the causes of the hostilities which had taken place between his Majesty’s gov. and the King of Candy.”—Mr. Creevey, having consented to withdraw his motion, the motion of Lord Castlereagh was agreed to.

Mr. Creevey then moved for copies of all despatches and letters from the governor of Ceylon to the British officers employed there, and from the latter to the former.

Lord Castlereagh objected to this motion, as calling for information which it would be inexpedient to produce, and therefore moved the previous question.

Mr. Fox was utterly astonished at the language held by the noble lord as to the production of this paper. The noble lord had asserted, that a time would come when no objection could exist to the production of the paper; but had he given the least argument against its production at the present moment? Had he offered a single tittle of reason to prove that the present time was not the fit moment for its being laid before Parliament? Was it a matter undeserving of instant inquiry, that a part of our force in Ceylon had sustained not only disaster

against the strong. The strength of any single Indian state at any time, and now I believe of all of them put together, is not to be compared to the military power and resources of the English. I do not say that these nations have no means of defence, or that the Mahrattas, for example, can do us no mischief; but that, considering the great disparity of force, it requires very clear evidence to make it credible, that whereas the disposition of the British power in India, is always, if possible, to preserve the peace, and to be satisfied with what we possess, this excellent disposition is never suffered to prevail because the Indian Princes are so restless and unruly, that we cannot, in common justice to ourselves, refrain from invading them. The fable says, the fierce, rebellious lamb, would never suffer the mild, gentle, moderate wolf to be quiet; if it was not you it was your father. These propositions *may* be true, but they require some proof; and, when the proof is produced, I shall desire it always to be observed and remembered that the evidence, that comes before us, is *ex parte*. We hear little or nothing of what the opposite, and possibly the injured party, have to say for themselves. Ever since I have known any thing of Indian affairs, I have found that the prevailing disease of our governments there has been a rage for making war. The strong, though ineffectual, remedies which have from time to time been applied to this disorder, are a sufficient proof of its existence. That individuals may find their account in the conduct of such wars, I do not mean to dispute. But I deny that they are or can be for the benefit of the India Company or the nation, particularly in the present circumstances of the Company's affairs. In these circumstances, and in actual possession of half the peninsula, you engage in a new war with the Mahrattas, the success of which can give you nothing but an addition of territory which you cannot keep without an intolerable increase of your military establishments, and a perpetual drain of all your resources, of men as well as money, and which you ought not to keep if you could. Whether the Mahrattas have united in defence of their country, or to carry the war into the heart of our best provinces, as they have done in former times, or with what loss or expense our success against them may have been purchased, are questions on which we are utterly in the dark. By public report alone we are informed, that a war of great extent at least, and liable to many important consequences, is now carrying on in India, and that no information of it has been communicated to

Parliament. Sir, I can safely assure this House, that the Mahrattas, though not capable of meeting us in the field, or at all likely to encounter us in a pitched battle, are nevertheless very well able to do us a great deal of mischief. In the year 1778, the Presidency of Bombay received and gave their protection to a Mahratta fugitive called Ragoba, and mustered all the force they could collect to escort him back to Poonah and to make themselves masters of that place. If the expedition had succeeded, I do not doubt that the persons who were engaged in it, would have been very well paid for their trouble. The event was, that their army was surrounded, starved, and compelled to capitulate. At some earlier periods of the history of India, the Mahrattas have frequently crossed the rivers and made rapid incursions into the upper provinces of Bengal and Bahar, carrying universal desolation with them wherever they went, ruining the country, and making it impossible to collect the revenues. I know no reason, why they may not make the same attempts again, and with the same success. With such bodies of horse as they can collect at a very short warning, from fifty to a hundred thousand in different quarters, they may pour into our provinces, over-run and lay waste the country, and then make their retreat with the same rapidity, without its being possible for us either to meet or to overtake them. This is their mode of making war, and it has always succeeded with them. They are the Tartars of India. In these circumstances, I ask, is it proper or not that Parliament should know, why this war was undertaken, for what purposes it has been pursued, and with what success it has been attended; and finally, has it the sanction and approbation of the Court of Directors, and of his Majesty's ministers? I cannot believe it possible.—If it should be stated, as I have some reason to expect it may, that the papers to which these motions allude, have not in fact been received by the Court of Directors, that answer must silence me for the present, but I must say that, in another point of view, it will be very unsatisfactory. The orders given by lord Wellesley, in consequence of which the hostilities began on the Malabar coast, must have been dated some time in June or early in July last. I beg of the House to observe the dates: we are now in the middle of March; so that 8 months and a half must have elapsed since the orders were given, and no information received at home on that subject. This is a case which the act of Parliament has foreseen and provided for. The words of the law are, that

"in all cases, where hostilities shall be commenced or treaty made, the governor general and council shall, by the most expeditious means they can devise, communicate the same to the Court of Directors, together with a full state of the information and intelligence, upon which they shall have commenced such hostilities or made such treaties, and their motives and reasons for the same at large." Until it shall appear in evidence that this delay of information directly from Lord Wellesley is not owing to any neglect or omission on his part, I am bound to presume that there is a fault somewhere. Supposing the measures in question should appear, upon inquiry, to deserve censure, that cause of censure will be greatly aggravated by the neglect of sending home timely information on the whole subject.—I am not able to foresee what sort of objection can be stated to the motions for papers, with which I mean to conclude. I rather hope for the acquiescence of the noble lord on the other side. At all events, I hope and expect, that personal character, or the personal confidence due to any man, will not be alleged in bar to this inquiry. At present there is no charge, and there ought to be no defence. If I have laid sufficient ground for inquiry, we are bound to inquire. If crimination should follow, it must be answered, not by character, but by proof. When an inquiry was moved for in this House, in the year 1791, into the causes of the first war with Tippoo Sultaun, no man's reputation stood higher in the estimation of the public than that of Lord Cornwallis. But I do not remember that any opposition to the inquiry was set up on the score of his personal character, though none was more generally respected. On the contrary, his Majesty's ministers met the inquiry fairly, and thought they could not defend his conduct better than by giving us all the information they possessed. I hope and I expect that the noble lord, now at the head of the Indian department, will follow that example. He professes to invite and encourage a free discussion of all Indian questions. If not, and if the motion, with which I am now about to conclude, should be resisted. I think the House will be reduced to one of these two conclusions; either that there is something in the personal merits of Lord Wellesley, which entitles him to greater confidence than was thought due to Lord Cornwallis; or that there has been something in his conduct, to which no other defence can be applied but a favourable opinion of his character. I move you, Sir, "That there be laid before this House copies

or extracts of all dispatches received from the governor general of Bengal, or from the presidencies of fort St. George and Bombay, as far as such dispatches relates to or account for hostilities, now or lately subsisting between the said governments and any of the Mahratta princes or states; with the dates of the receipts of such dispatches."—Copies or extracts of all the correspondence between the said governments and any of the Mahratta princes or states, relative to the said hostilities."—"Copies or extracts of all orders or instructions sent to India by the Court of Directors of the East India Company, on the same subject."—On the question being put from the chair,

Lord Castlereagh rose. He expressed his approbation of the candid manner in which the hon. gent. had introduced his motion, and joined issue completely with him in regard to the general principle, that the cause of the war is a very proper subject of parliamentary inquiry. Independent of the acts, he was ready, his lordship said, to admit of the propriety of an inquiry, both as a matter of policy and justice. But the question was at present, whether such an inquiry could be safely made in the present circumstances? And here he differed, his lordship said, very materially from the hon. gent. Independently of the disadvantages that might arise from such an investigation, during a war not yet terminated, on which he was not disposed to lay very great stress, he had stronger and very ostensible reasons for objecting to the motion. The government were not in possession of the circumstances that preceded the rupture; and, therefore, any investigation of the kind proposed by the present motion must necessarily terminate unsatisfactorily, and to the obvious prejudice of the noble lord (Wellesley) to whom the government of India was entrusted. Without having all the circumstances that led to the war, it would be impossible to form a proper estimate of the case, or to do any justice to the conduct of the governor general. The House must wait, therefore, till the necessary communications be received by his Majesty's government. Such a communication was soon to be expected. That it should have been made sooner was impossible, from the date at which the war took place. It had been said that war commenced in the beginning of June, but instead of this it was not till the 6th of August that hostilities took place. The communications between the Mysore and Poonah could not be effected in less than a month, and the latest communications received from Madras were of the first of September; there must be

necessarily many documents therefore, in regard to the preliminaries, of which government could not be in possession, and which were absolutely necessary to do justice to the noble lord's conduct. He had no objection to the principle, but he was not able at present to comply with the motion. He was ready, however, as soon as government should be in possession of the necessary documents, not only to comply with the motion, but even apprise the hon. gent. as soon as such dispatches were received.

Mr. *Johnstone* was of opinion that, though the war might not have commenced till the period stated by the noble lord, yet there must necessarily be many circumstances previous to open hostilities which ought certainly to have been communicated to government. It was not of the 6th of August only to which he wished to look back but to trace the war to its source. From the moment that orders had been given to march the troops from the Mysore, the commencement of the war was certainly to be dated. The very march of that army, he would insist, was against the acts and resolutions of the House as much as any event on the 6th of August. The moment Lord Wellesley issued those orders to his army, he ought to have sent dispatches at the same time to this country, stating his reasons for such measures. But he was apprehensive there was too frequently a suppression of documents. All the proceedings of the government of India ought to appear on the records of the Company, and be regularly transmitted to this country. Were this the case, we should at all times have the fullest information. He was afraid that war had originated in aggression on our part, and was owing to that spirit of ambition that had been too prevalent in India, and which particularly had characterized the government of the noble Lord. But, whatever be the issue of the war, he contended, it must be disastrous in its consequences. If attended with success, our empire in India must be as large as the two peninsulas, and consequently ready to fall in pieces by its own weight. But, should we be defeated in our attempts at aggrandizement, the most probable consequence is, that we shall be turned out of India, and a period put at once to our empire. Here the hon. gent. insisted on the power and influence of the Mahrattas. In our former wars in India, our resources had been derived from the revenues of Bengal, which always remained untouched; but here the case was extremely different. The revenues of Bengal would be immediately affected and, in case

of defeat, or in case, which was not at all improbable, of the enemy laying waste the country, the consequences might be fatal. The present case resembled, in some degree, perhaps that of the Carnatic. The dispatches to which the noble lord alludes, and for which he desires us to wait, may in all probability contain nothing. Such was the case exactly in the dispatches from Lord Clive, in regard to the Carnatic.

Lord *Castlereagh* was ready to admit the importance of the communications in regard to the causes of the war; but the end also of the correspondence was certainly equally important, and absolutely necessary either to justify or condemn the conduct of the governor general in his commencement of hostilities.

Mr. *Francis* thought that reasons might have been assigned by the governor general for the issue of his orders to the troops to march, which had happened two months previous to the period alluded to by the noble lord. He was willing, however, to rely on the engagement which the noble lord had taken on himself to apprise him of the first arrival of the necessary dispatches, and begged leave therefore, at present, to withdraw his motion.—The other orders of the day being disposed of, the House adjourned till to-morrow.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, March 15.

Counsel were heard on Lady Mary Fitzgerald's claim to the Ross peerage; to be further heard on Tuesday next.—A conversation ensued on the Irish deacons' and priests orders bill, in which Lord Ellenborough, the Bishops of St. Asaph, Ferns, Hereford, and the Lord Chancellor, spoke; after which the bill was ordered to be committed on this day se'nnight.—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, March 15.

[*MINUTES.*—Mr. Alexander brought up the reports of the committee on the Irish cloathing militia bill; also of the cloathing militia bill for Great Britain; also of the bill for ascertaining the amount of pay for serjeant-majors in the militia; which reports were received.—On the motion of Mr. Alexander, leave was given to bring in a bill for fixing the rate of allowance to innkeepers for quartering soldiers.—The militia subaltern officers' pay bill, and the ship duty bill, were committed.—Mr. Alexander

brought up the report of the committee on the expiring laws' bill, which report was received, and bills were ordered to be brought in pursuant to the resolutions of the said committee.—The Irish duty Bill, the Irish countervailing duty bill, and the Irish malt duty bill, were read a third time and passed.—The two millions exchequer loan bill was read a second time.—Mr. Pitt gave notice that it was his intention, on the first open day, to move for leave to bring in a bill, the professed object of which would be to introduce some amendments in the army of reserve bill, as well as some other provisions for the more effectual recruiting of the army. He should wish to have this bill brought in previous to the ensuing holidays, and printed in time for its being taken into consideration as soon as possible after the recess. Mr. Pitt, after a few words from the Speaker, fixed Tuesday next, as the day for bringing forward his motion.

Mr. *Howard* said, that he should move the second reading of the Croydon and Portsmouth canal bill, for the purpose of afterwards moving that the said order be discharged (on account of the important business expected to come on), and that the said bill be read a second time on Thursday the 12th of April next. Having moved accordingly:

Mr. *Jolliffe* moved, as an amendment, "that the bill be read a second time this day six months."

Mr. *Howard* expressed his surprise, that in a business of this sort, of so much importance to the commercial world, the hon. gent. should not be willing that the bill be referred to the consideration of a committee. This he thought necessary, in order that gentlemen might have time to consider a business of so much importance to the public.

Lord *W. Russell* objected to the progress of the bill, on the ground that the total estimate of expense amounted to 800,000*l.* whilst not more than 120,000*l.* of this money was actually subscribed.

Mr. *Somers Cocks* strenuously objected against the bill's going into a committee. He allowed that canals were in many instances beneficial to the public; but, in the present instance, the House would look carefully how it gave its sanction to a bill which appeared to him to be contrary to every principle of propriety. The subscription money, little more than one-fourth part of the total estimated expense, had induced a resolution of the proprietors that the canal should not be carried farther than to Croydon or

thereabouts, until more money should be subscribed, which was an acknowledgment of sufficient weight, in his mind, to prevent the bill being carried any farther through the House, as it was a sad principle, and not to be encouraged; giving encouragement to canals when there was no national prospect of their being brought to a completion. It would be to afford a pretext for projectors and adventurers to introduce much mischief through the country under such circumstances. In addition to this objection he had to state, that the line of country through which the canal was proposed to pass, would prove infinitely injurious to the landed proprietors, who he believed gave little or no support to this bill.

Mr. *Hurst* wished that the House, by going into a committee on the bill, might have an opportunity of reconsidering this measure, and he believed that it was the desire of that part of the country, through which it was proposed the canal should pass that the Bill might meet with a fair discussion; nor could the House come to a proper decision without hearing counsel, if required; and the examination of evidence both for and against the measure.

Sir *John Anderson* said, that he rose to declare, as president of Christ's Hospital, that the property of that charitable institution, would be materially injured were this bill to pass. He should, therefore, vote for the amendment.—The motion for the bill's being read a second time this day six months, being put and carried, it was consequently thrown out for this Session.

[NAVAL INQUIRY.] Mr. *Pitt*. — Sir; as I have reason to believe that a part, and I must confess a very important part, of the information which it is my wish the House should be in possession of, with respect to the state and means of our naval defence, is not likely to meet with any opposition on the part of his Majesty's ministers, I shall not detain the time of the House with any details or observations which do not apply, as closely as possible, to the papers that constitute the object of my inquiry. I shall, therefore, state generally the grounds and ends of the different motions I have to bring forward; but I beg leave to add, that if they are, as it will appear to me, unexpectedly objected to, I shall claim the indulgence of the House, in explaining more fully, and calling their attention to the importance of the information in detail, which I conceive essentially necessary to the safety of the country.—The object of the first motion I shall have the honour of making, will be, an humble address to his Majesty

"That he may be pleased to give directions to have laid before the House, on account of the number of ships of the line, ships of 50 guns, frigates, sloops of war, bombs, hired armed vessels, &c. in commission on the 31st of December, 1793, on the 30th of September, 1801, and on the 31st of Dec. 1803, specifying the service in which they were respectively employed." Gentlemen will perceive that this motion calls for the production of papers, distinguishing what is absolutely necessary for their information, the state of three different periods in which the naval means of the country's defence were called into action. When the question is properly considered, with respect to the necessity of making great preparations, in order to meet with vigour and efficacy those carrying on by the enemy, and openly avowed to be intended against the existence of this nation, I believe it will be found, that the number of that description of our naval force, fit to repel the actual attempts of the enemy, is at the present moment much inferior and less adequate to the exigency of the danger, than at any period in former times. Shall I, Sir, detain the House with a tedious recital of the great and extraordinary changes which have taken place, and which call for increased activity and exertion? Such an appeal is rendered unnecessary by the actual state of things, and by facts which cannot be controverted.—If, on former occasions, we have been called upon to make preparations of defence in their magnitude superior to preceding cases, it does not require from me any arguments to convince the House, that in our present situation our means of security should be much greater in a comparative point of view, and that in proportion as we are threatened, not only with the acknowledged determination of the enemy, but with his increased power of effecting an invasion, we should redouble our efforts, and be ready to guard against every possible risk which may be hazarded against our independence and happiness.—The next point to which I shall beg leave to call the attention of the House is that species of naval force which is best calculated to meet and defeat that preparing by the enemy, to accomplish the great and favourite object of invasion. I believe, that at the commencement of the last year, it occurred to the lords of the Admiralty, that the kind of force best calculated to act against the attempts which might be made to effect a descent was that more peculiarly fitted to display itself in shoal water; and I have good grounds to believe, that the lords of the Admiralty, thinking so, were of

opinion, that it ought to be considerably augmented. But although they were of that opinion, in the month of January, 1803, yet I can state to the House, without the fear of contradiction, that only 23 gun-vessels were provided for, as an augmentation to this species of naval force, 5 of which were to be completed in 3, and the remainder in 6 months. I mean, Sir, that this provision against invasion was undertaken to be carried into effect in the month of January, 1804. Yet of all the vessels likely to be employed with success, this craft was, of all others, the most eligible, whether its means of defence and annoyance are to be considered, or the water on which it is destined to act. The lords of the Admiralty, convinced, however, of the necessity of employing it, took some measures for an establishment of that nature; and I am naturally led to inquire into the steps which they pursued to complete so desirable an object. They determined to have 5 gun-boats ready in three months, and the whole, constituting 23, finished for actual service in 6 months. It is undoubtedly a very material point to inquire why this augmentation was not thought of at an earlier period. Am I, Sir, to recapitulate the various motives which should have accelerated increased exertion? Were I to do so; I should merely restore what has been obvious to every man of common sense and common observation. In the month of August, when we saw the necessity of augmented efforts; when we saw transports for the conveyance of troops collecting daily in the port of Boulogne; when we saw them gaining new strength and new additions, during the fine weather, to the months of November and December, and when we knew that they had increased to upwards of 1000 in the same port, independent of the armaments in Helvoet, in the Texel, in Brest, and other points of attack; what reason, let me ask, can be assigned for the gross neglect which has taken place in this respect? But above all, Sir, let me ask what defence can be set up for this extraordinary conduct, when we were told by government itself, that we were threatened with invasion from day to day; when we had, if I am not very much misinformed, reason to believe that 100 strong gun-boats were collected at Boulogne ready to convoy and protect the enemy's flotilla assembled in that same port? In stating all these circumstances, it is hardly necessary for me, I think, to apply them to the subject under our discussion. Having, as I have observed, all these proofs before us, I wish to know, and I trust I shall not be con- sidered

dered as asking too much, why we can have but a force to meet the enemy in his own way, a part of which is to be ready only in 3 months, and the remainder, the greater part, to be completed in not less than 6? If we have been preparing for a considerable time, with all the efforts of which the country is capable, an immense land force; if government be serious in the notice which it has given, and in the alarm which it has diffused, of the attack that menaces our independence and even our existence; if we are now ready to contend on our native soil with an enemy waiting for a favourable moment to make a descent in that class of vessels peculiarly adapted to cross the Channel; I hope I shall not be thought unreasonable in asking, why the best and most effectual means of meeting and triumphing over the danger, have been so long suspended; and why a part of our counteracting exertions, in the naval department of our strength, has been deferred for three months, and the more considerable part has been postponed for the space of six months? This will constitute the object of the second motion, with which I shall trouble the House. I shall not, thinking, as I do, that it would be an unprofitable waste of time, undertake to shew, that the means of our national defence with respect to the use of gun-boats, have been improperly used; and that when it was found necessary to resort to them, they were only attempted too late to be effectual. I have now to state what has been done in the course of the last war when the occasion was less pressing, and the circumstances were, under every point of view, of a less imperious nature; and I have to assure the House, that if the proper documents be granted, I shall undertake to prove the truth of the assertions which I may feel it my duty to bring forward. Gentlemen will, no doubt, recollect, that in 1794, 1797, and 1801, it was found necessary to augment the same species of naval force to which I have this evening alluded. What was the conduct of government at each of these periods? A considerable number of gun-boats was got ready in the two first periods, within ten weeks only, and the same activity of preparation was carried on with success in the year 1801, within the space of from 12 to 14 weeks. Instead of any exertion now, similar to those instances which I have mentioned, we are informed, that the greater part of our means of defence is to be completed within 6 months, and that a few gun-boats will be ready at the end of three.—Thus, Sir, I am warranted in maintaining that here we have sufficient grounds for a

motion to address his Majesty, that he might be graciously pleased to use additional vigour and expedition in preparing and maturing our naval means of defence against the enemy's armaments; for employing redoubled activity against the danger with which we are threatened, and for guarding the narrow seas with more strictness and vigilance. These, it will not be denied, constitute objects of true constitutional inquiry, and they form a most satisfactory ground for me to demand the information which I desire may be laid before this House. In the like manner I also propose, "that an humble address be presented to his Majesty, for a copy of the contracts made, and the orders given, by the lords of the Admiralty, in 1793, 1797, and 1803, with respect to the number of gun-vessels to be built, distinguishing the time at which each contract was made, the period in which it was to be brought to a conclusion, and the amount of the sum to be paid for the performance of it." These accounts are the more important and material, as they will give the House the opportunity of not only seeing the opinion of the lords of the Admiralty on the subject but they will also afford the means of comparing our naval strength in this respect, as it actually exists, and what it was in former instances, and tend most essentially to promote that end for which we cannot be too zealous in our wishes—the security of the country. It is not for me to anticipate the opinion of gentlemen upon these questions; but most certainly no man will undertake to tell me, that this is not a proper mode for satisfying the House, whether the preparations which have been made by his Majesty's ministers, in the direction of naval affairs, have been commensurate to the magnitude of the crises in which we are placed. As the measures I have thought proper to touch upon are decisively necessary for the defence of the country, I will not fatigue the House by dwelling on them at a length that must be uninteresting and tedious. There is, I am confident, no man who hears me that is not convinced of the vast importance of these objects, which are superior in magnitude to any that can occupy our attention. They can receive no embellishment or illustration from any words which it is in my power to use for they press themselves irresistibly on the minds of all.—Another object to which I shall call the attention of the House is, however remote it may appear to some, not less essential to the permanent security and happiness of the country. I mean, Sir, not what relates to our present danger, and our actual exertions, but to

what should be our system of conduct even were peace to be concluded, with respect to any farther war. It is a consideration, let me say, in which not only our own dearest interests, but the interests and destiny of Europe are involved. Next to the two first points which I have noticed it remains with the House to determine whether the state of our navy, at the commencement of the war was such as to call for augmentation or diminution. In the year 1801, it was impossible to suppose that the navy did not require more exertion than in 1793, for every thing indicated that it was not so promising as in the beginning of the former war. I have no desire to disclose the precise condition of our present force, but the truth is, that you were bound to make every possible exertion and even efforts altogether unprecedented, to augment and repair your navy at the beginning of the present war, from motives and causes which did not exist in the commencement of the former war. It is almost needless for me, Sir, to remark, that there are two modes of increasing our naval strength with respect to our shipping; the one by building vessels in the King's yards, the other by building them in consequence of private contracts in the merchants' yards. If we look to the progress of our naval improvement for a very long time, we shall find that no less than two-thirds of it have been built in the merchants' yards; and undoubtedly it is not necessary for me to state to the House that which must be known to every person conversant with the subject, that building in the King's yards in time of war is nearly suspended altogether. I have also to remark, what I am convinced will not escape the attention of gentlemen, that the great augmentation of our navy does not arise from ships begun in a period of war, but from ships which have been laid upon the stocks for several years antecedent. During the last war, I can state, without the possibility of contradiction, that out of 24 ships of the line prepared and finished for actual service, two alone were supplied from his Majesty's yards. What conclusion then, it may be said, do I intend to draw from these facts? I wish to establish it as a system that should be acted upon, that when the circumstances of the times require extraordinary efforts, you should look to the building of ships by contract, and that you should also look to the augmentation of your navy, not in the precise moment when necessity calls for exertion, but many years antecedent to the pressure of any unforeseen exigency. As to the difference

of building between the King's and the merchants' yards, it was evident that no material difference arose in point of expense, since, in the latter, the amount of the expense was regulated by public advertisement, and the work was to be executed in the best manner. Now, Sir, if I am not very much mistaken, I am enabled to state, that since the present Lords of the Admiralty have come into office, only 2 ships of the line have been contracted for to be built in the merchants' yards. I mean to shew that entering on the present war, when our navy could not be in so good a condition as at the beginning of the former war, every possible means should have been taken to augment and strengthen it; that it was a period which required greater exertion; and that only 2 ships of the line have been contracted for; while, during the last war, out of 29 ships of the line, the King's yards furnished but two. But if the Admiralty be liable to censure for these omissions, it will be found still more so from details which I can pledge myself to prove in the most satisfactory way. I have explicitly to state, that there are at this moment docks and slips in the river unoccupied, which are calculated for building 14 or 15 ships of the line. When, therefore, all these circumstances are put together and fairly considered, I hope I shall not be told, that they do not constitute grounds for an address to his Majesty.—The next motion I have to make is, "that there be laid before the House a list of such ships as have been built in the King's yards in 1793 and 1801." But if gentlemen should think any information on this head might be the channel of improper intelligence to the enemy, I shall feel it my duty to abstain from pressing the motion on the House; for I am aware that there will still be grounds sufficiently strong to convince the House, that the construction of vessels in the merchants' yards is preferable to that which is now adopted in those of his Majesty's. I shall afterwards submit a motion for the production of a list, similar in substance and time, of the vessels built by contract in private yards; and to this I conceive no material objection can be made. A noble friend of mine, on the bench below me (Lord Castlereagh) has, on a former night, entered into a comparative view of the state of our naval force in different years; but it was so generally couched, as to be very little suited to the present inquiries which form the objects of my motions. It is material for the House to remark, that in the former war we set out with 16,000

men, who were soon after augmented with 2,000 more, and in the course of the year were increased to the number of 75 or 76,000, including marines. In the present war we started with 50,000 men, and it should not pass unnoticed that we also engaged in it when our mercantile marine was increased in a material proportion. Yet, what was done? Why, although we begun with 50,000 men, and had all the great advantages arising from an unprecedented prosperity of trade and commerce, our naval force did not exceed, in the number of men, 86,000 at the end of the year. Thus, in the first year of the former war, we had an increase of 60,000 seamen, and on the first year of the present war, an augmentation of 36,000 only. In the few plain statements I have made, the House will perceive that I have cautiously abstained from all general reasoning, and that I have carefully confined myself to such grounds as I have thought sufficient to justify the motions I have to bring forward. Should the motions be refused, I trust, however, that I shall be indulged by the House in any further reasoning and explanation which I may be called upon to employ; and should they be granted, I shall reserve, for a future day, the remarks and illustrations to which their objects must naturally lead me. The considerations which they involve are of the first importance, and render it, in my mind, the indispensable duty of Parliament to agree in an address to his Majesty. I shall therefore conclude with moving, "That an humble address be presented to his Majesty, praying that his Majesty may be graciously pleased to give orders, that an account of the number of ships of the line, of ships of 50 guns, frigates, sloops of war, bombs, hired armed vessels, &c. as have been in commission, with the distribution of their respective services on the 31st of December, 1793, on the 30th of September, 1801, and the 31st of December, 1803, be laid before the House."

Mr. *Tierney*.—Sir; the House will, I hope, indulge me with some small portion of their attention, more particularly after the speech which the right hon. gent. has delivered. In whatever light I consider the present motions, the more I am inclined to think the conduct of the right hon. gent. as one of the most extraordinary proceedings I ever witnessed. I agree with the right hon. gent. that government did think the country placed in a most alarming crisis, and I was, therefore, led to hope that those who were of that opinion would abstain from questions more calculated to engender dis-

content, to create fears, and to diffuse dissatisfaction, than likely to be of the slightest advantage to the public. — What I have most particularly to complain of is, that the right hon. gent. brings forward his motions without any grounds whatever. He merely sets up his own opinion against that of the Admiralty; and if this criterion is to be admitted, I can be under no apprehension with respect to the event of his inquiries, since the conduct of the Admiralty is sanctioned by the general approbation of the country. I feel, Sir, that clamour is no proof of the contrary of what I have stated, and that I speak from what I know, not, like some gentlemen, from what is supposed to be known. I merely speak from the knowledge which has reached me personally, and I cannot help expressing some surprise at finding myself in so noisy a place in so quiet a country. I trust I cannot be accused of inconsistency in calling this a very extraordinary proceeding, since, while an inquiry is proposed to be instituted, which has for its object the censure of the Admiralty, we find all the enemy's ports sealed up, our commerce protected in every direction, and our trade prosperous in an unexampled degree. If I recollect right, there was a time when the right hon. gent. was unbounded in his expressions of esteem for the capacity and talents of the First Lord of the Admiralty, and I should wish to know how long it is since he has changed his mind respecting that noble Lord. It cannot be out of the recollection of the House, that the right hon. gent. spoke in terms of the highest panegyric of Lord St. Vincent, and that when he recommended others to fill situations under government, as likely to execute the duties of their office with credit, he mentioned the noble earl as one so admirably qualified to preside over the naval department, that the whole country looked up to him as the only person fitted for the First Lord of the Admiralty. The only difference then, between me and the right hon. gent. is, that he has changed an opinion, which he solemnly delivered in this House, and that I have adhered to the sentiments which he stated, strictly coinciding as they did with my own feelings. With respect to the great talents of Earl St. Vincent, let me say, although they can derive no support from my feeble praise, that I believe no man is superior to him as an admiral; and I am confident that I shall be borne out by the unanimous voice of the public, when I state that his services have been no less splendid, than productive of the most solid and permanent advantages. I also know, that

such is his patriotism and his sense of honour, that the noble Lord would rather suffer every thing, than lose what he values beyond all other considerations, the confidence of his countrymen. The right hon. gent., altogether unmindful of the compliments which he before passed on Lord St. Vincent, now brings forward a charge of incapacity against him; for, by all his motions, nothing less is meant; and we are called upon to decide, that there is glaring want of skill in the First Lord of the Admiralty, for which the right hon. gent. is to find an adequate remedy. We all know the pre-eminent merits of the right hon. gent. as a volunteer; we know how very much the country is indebted to him for his exertions in that line; but still, I trust, he will excuse me, when I assure him that, I think the land service quite enough for him, without taking any part in the sea-service. But the right hon. gent. says, "agree to my motions; grant me the papers which I demand, and I shall undertake to prove all my assertions." I say, no; we must, in that case, necessarily have an inquiry; and upon what grounds am I to understand that an inquiry is admitted by the country to be proper at this moment? The details which must take place would be long and complicated, and they must go to criminate Lord St. Vincent, or give to the right hon. gent. a hold to move for more papers. I am at a loss to conceive how the measure can, for a single instant, be entertained by the House, when no cause, no fact, is brought forward in support of it; when every possible energy pervades the whole branch of the public service over which the noble lord presides; when naval skill, vigilance and activity, are displayed in every quarter, and the best officers are employed in every direction, with the highest honour to themselves, and the greatest advantages to their country. But Lord St. Vincent, we are told has prepared, or is preparing, only 23 gun-boats, to oppose to the enemy's attempt at invasion. This accusation, which seems calculated to dispirit the country, comes, let me observe, rather oddly from the right hon. gent. who has called loudly for every confidence which could not be reposed in govt. and has deprecated, in the most earnest language, every appearance of party spirit. The fact, however, is, that there is a greater proportion of force, and of that peculiar kind of naval force adapted to meet the enemy's armament on the coast, to which the right hon. gent. has alluded, than gentlemen expect. They will hear, not perhaps without some surprise, yet I have no

doubt with real satisfaction, that our naval strength is not only immense, but admirably composed for a variety of service. The particulars of a short statement, which I have the honour to submit to the House, can be justified by the most authentic documents. The ships of the line, frigates, sloops of war, bombs, and other vessels, amount to 511; block-ships supplied by the Trinity House are 9; the lighters and small craft fitted in the King's yards, are, according to the last returns 373; the ships furnished by the East India Company 19; and the flotilla completely equipped and ready for immediate service, amounts to 624. Making altogether 1,536; and yet, Sir, this force of 1,536 vessels has been prepared and completed by this unworthy First Lord of the Admiralty! But unfortunately for the safety of the country, the right hon. gent. has discovered, that only 23 gun-brigs have been contracted for. Will the House agree upon the bare assertion of the right hon. gent. that Lord St. Vincent is to blame, and requires a great deal of looking after; or rather will they not agree, that the opinion of the right hon. gent. has less weight with the country than that of Earl St. Vincent? With respect to building ships by contract, which the right hon. gent. so strenuously recommends, he says, it is nearly impossible to build vessels in the King's yards in time of war; but although this assertion may be admitted to a certain extent, it will not, I trust, be denied, that ships may be completed and repaired there. However we consider the question, it is evident, that we have no case made out by the right hon. gent. and that we require some proof besides his bare assertion—I have also to observe, that the merchants' yards have been tried, and have been found not altogether so well suited to the building of ships as some persons seem to think. Are contractors so fully to be relied on, that the right hon. gent. has had no cause to be dissatisfied with them, after an experience of seventeen years? Besides, Sir, Earl St. Vincent may be so very parsimonious of the public money as to be inimical to all idle expenditure. The speech of the right hon. gent. on this point appears to me to smell of a contract. I shall content myself with an instance of building in the merchants' yard. The Ajax was built for 41,000*l.* and the bargain was thought a very good one, yet in the course of three years, a further sum of 17,000*l.* was wanted to complete her for service.—In short, Sir, we are called upon to decide, without proper documents, that Lord St. Vincent is to blame, and that the naval law laid down by the

right hon. shipwright behind me, is to be considered as undeniable. Are we then to pass an opinion, that the navy of England is hastening to its ruin, and this on the suggestions of one who calls for general exertion and cordial co-operation against the enemy; but who now seems to be affected by a panic which he formerly treated with contempt? I wish then to ask the right hon. gent., and I will put it to the House, whether he believes that the attack he has made this night on the Admiralty, is likely to do good either in this country or abroad?—With respect to the number of seamen, I have no objection to agree to the production of that account; but the right hon. gent. has not taken a fair comparative view of the number raised within the first year of the last war and the year 1803. At the former period, after a peace of 10 years, the navy derived a very considerable increase in men from the spirit of enterprize, the prospect of prize money, and the great distress of the mercantile interest. There was also at that time no supplementary militia, no army of reserve, nor a variety of collateral circumstances which, in the actual conjuncture of affairs, prevent the supplies of men for the sea service. The success which has attended the levy of men in the present year is truly satisfactory, when we consider that the land service has required great efforts, and that the volunteer force alone amounts to 450,000 men; and so far should we be from blaming Lord St. Vincent, that his conduct in this respect is entitled to the highest praise. It appears, that of the 100,000 men voted by Parliament, there are not quite 2,000 deficient; for by the returns made, there were in actual service, to the 31st of December, 76,000 men: according to the returns made to the Admiralty by the regulating captains, 6,441; and the marines amounted, on the 10th of March, to 15,673 men; giving a total of 98,174 seamen and marines. I will now, Sir, put it to the House, whether a more successful exertion could have been made in the teeth of the volunteers, of the army of reserve, and of the supplementary militia, where only 1,700 men were wanting to complete the whole of the estimate? But, Sir, this is not all; we have also a force of 25,000 sea fencibles for Great-Britain, putting Ireland out of the question. In all these instances I may safely ask, whether the noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty is a fit object for distrust and suspicion? But I am entitled also to inquire where the right hon. gentleman has

had his information? If he has obtained it from some great naval officer, it certainly may be worth attending to; but until I am satisfied of this, all I beg of the right hon. gent. is, not to attack, by a side wind, a character that deserves as much from the hands of the country as any man that ever lived in it; a character who has fought the battles of his country with as much bravery and as much gallantry as any hero of any country, ancient or modern; and from his recent exertions, zeal, and activity, has shewn himself as well qualified to serve his country in the high station which he now so honourably fills, as any man can possibly be. I will ask the right hon. gent. if he does not think such proceedings as that of the motion he has this night brought forward, and his subsequent reasoning on it, must tend in a high degree to invigorate and inspire the enemy, whilst it must cause despondency at home? I have never heard, from any quarter, a complaint of want of men or of ships, except in the insinuations of the right hon. gent. The noble earl at the head of the Admiralty has procured nearly the full complement of seamen voted by Parliament in the shortest time, and under the greatest and most pressing difficulties that any man in his situation ever had to contend with, and, therefore, unless I have better reasons given than any that have been hitherto adduced, I must think myself justified in refusing papers, the production of which can have no other effect than that of further inquiry which would not fail to convey a very strong insinuation and suspicion against the character of Earl St. Vincent, which stands most deservedly so high in the estimation of a vast majority of the country, that I believe it is the general opinion there never has been his equal. On these grounds I agree to the production of two of the papers, but not to the others, as they cannot be produced without bringing in question what I do not think it now right to answer—why the merchants' yards are not applied to for building ships at the present period. I therefore move, by way of amendment, that the following words be added to the first motion, after the words gun-boats and gun-brigs, "and all other armed ships, vessels and boats, used in the public service."

Sir *Charles Pole* said, he had no official documents to assist him, but must trust in a great measure to his memory for what he had then to deliver to the consideration of the House. He did not mean to trespass on the time of the House, but to endeavour

to confine, or rather to direct their attention to the leading facts which had taken place relative to our naval defence since the commencement of the war. It must, he thought, be perfectly in the recollection of the House, that, in the space of 48 hours after it was known that hostilities were actually to commence. Admiral Cornwallis sailed for Brest to blockade the enemy's squadron in that port. Since that time, his force had been from time to time reinforced, and was now so strong and numerous as to carry the fullest conviction to the breasts of the whole world, that there never had been a period in our history in which the exertions of the Admiralty had been so great as at the present moment. When the House looked backward to what has been done since the commencement of the war, the large fleets we had off Brest, Toulon, Ferrol, and considered the loyalty, zeal, and activity with which every admiral, and every officer in these several fleets were animated, and then, if the question were, whether the right hon. gent. or Earl St. Vincent were in the right, he believed the House would not be long in determining.—With respect to the gun-boats, he conceived those we had now in our service were far more useful than the gun-brigs which had been used last war, and which he appealed to the testimony and opinion of the hon. Admiral opposite to him (Berkeley) whether they were not mere jobs? Besides, it was not by gun-boats that gun-boats were to be resisted; it was by our frigates, sloops, and other ships of war of larger force, that any very considerable and material impression can be made on them.—For his part, he thought the House should cautiously entertain a question of this nature, and should refuse inquiry which would create suspicion, and might be attended with very mischievous consequences to the naval service, and to the general interest and welfare of the country. The House would do well to recollect also, that we had only been fortunate enough to enjoy a very few months peace after ten years of extremely laborious service, so that, when at the end of the war the men were discharged, there was scarcely one who would not rather have died than enter again, which had very greatly increased the difficulty of raising the number that had been voted by Parliament. The men had, however, been raised to nearly the full complement; but this had been done by means of uncommon and unceasing exertions, which reflected the highest credit on the Admiralty. From

the beginning of the war to the present moment, the fleets had been constantly and continually on the alert; and there never had been shewn so much gallant perseverance and excellent seamanship as in our Brest fleet having kept its station in spite of every obstacle during so many months. The fleet lying off Ferrol, Toulon, the Texel, Flushing, &c. had all evinced the same persevering bravery, zeal, and watchfulness, and shewed, that if we were but unanimous amongst ourselves, we might bid defiance to all the power and menaces of an enemy that durst not venture out of any of his ports to face the squadrons, whether great or small, that were stationed to confine them therein.

Admiral *Berkeley* would not have offered himself so soon to the Speaker's notice, had he not been called upon by his hon. and gallant friend (Admiral Pole), and by some evident misstatements which had been made by the right hon. gent. (Mr. Tierney). To the first he should reply, that he was not aware of the jobs which had been made of gun-boats last war, but certainly could say, that the gun vessels, which his right hon. friend alluded to in his motion, were not of that description, but were of a class of which he should have occasion to mention hereafter. With respect to the triumphant sort of flourish which had been made use of by Mr. Tierney, who said, that no ground of complaint had been made out against the Admiralty, and that he expected to hear of convoys being cut off, and vessels taken, he should only state, that something of that sort might have been alledged with justice, which he should likewise allude to by and by; but when he heard him state that the care and providence of the Admiralty had been such as to raise the whole extent of the vote of seamen, except 1700, he must suppose that he was so newly come into office, and as yet felt himself so little at home in it, that he had neither examined the truth of his assertions, nor asked any professional person if it could possibly be the case. The fact was, that he had taken the whole of the returns of the Navy office from the monthly books of the ships, which amounted to 70,000 men; in which the marines were included, and had added to the 15,000 marines which were returned to the Admiralty from the headquarters. Did he mean to say, that there were 15,000 marines at this time who were not embarked? Because certainly, the fact was not so. There was hardly a marine at any of the head quarters. They were all embarked on board of the fleet, and included as well as the 6,000 impressed seamen, in

the returns at the Navy Office, and consequently included in the 76,000 men; which brought the question, if it had any reference to the motion before the House, to a state much nearer the truth, viz. that instead of the seamen being equal to the vote, which was 100,000 men; instead of being only 1700 short of that vote, it would be found that they were nearly 20,000 short of that number.—With respect to the number of gun vessels which the right hon. gent. had chosen to state, and amongst which he classed the launches and cutters, which he chose to say were better than the gun brigs alluded to by his right hon. friend (Mr. Pitt), he must positively deny both the one and the other, the number and the quality. If he chose to call every cockleshell into which a gun was placed, a gun vessel, he certainly might make them out; but of those he had seen, some were unable to go out, even to Spithead, unless it was in a calm; and as for the comparison, it was too trifling and too ridiculous ever to enter into the head of a professional man; but as the right hon. gent. was not so, he might perhaps be excused for making it. He should now come to the motions made by his right hon. friend, which he must not only think proper but necessary, as they would not only put all questions upon the conduct of the Admiralty at rest in future, but tend to shew if they had done every thing in their power, and whether they had made every preparation for the defence of the coast which they ought to have done." In his opinion, they had not. It might perhaps be asked by some persons, where he had gained his experience in the service to form such an opinion? How proper, and how just, how wise, or how decent such a question coming from such a quarter, might be, he certainly should not think of saying, but should leave to the judgment of the House. It was to the experience of much older and more experienced officers than himself he would appeal; and if all officers of high rank and knowledge in the navy were called to the bar of that House, they would corroborate what he should advance. He averred this. He averred, that if a sufficient number of gun-vessels of a proper construction, had been built and manned, which they could have been by this time, to have assisted the frigates and ships which the Admiralty say they have in the Channel, the junction of the enemy's flotilla at Boulogne would have been prevented and this he would prove not by his experience, but by facts and documents, furnished to the public by the Admiralty themselves. Look at the *Gazettes*, in which the

gallant young officers who commanded the frigates, have told you, "we have taken 1, 2, or 3 gun boats; we could have taken more, but they escaped into shallow water, where it was impossible to follow them." He asked, would this have happened if they had been provided with gun-vessels to assist them? Certainly not. But even of those frigates and sloops upon which such dependence is placed, he averred the Admiralty had not provided a sufficient number. No; not even for the common duties of the Channel; and this he would likewise prove, by official documents. (Here he read advertisements for contracting for fourteen armed ships for convoys) what did this prove? Why, that the Admiralty were driven (for the date of this proposal is subsequent to the right hon. gent.'s notice), to hire the worst and most expensive sort of vessels; vessels which until this time, were never resorted to, except at the outset of a war, while the frigates, &c., were getting ready. But what does this prove? Why, that the fact is, we have not a frigate or sloop left or built, to fit out for the necessary defence and protection of the Channel. Might they not have them? Certainly they might; and he was happy to find that he was not the only officer who had offered plans for this purpose to the Admiralty; he would read a part of one of these plans, by which it would be seen, that a force might, and still may be, created which would effectually secure our coasts, annoy the enemy, and by not interfering with the usual naval exertions, might be instantly manned, and by these means leave the frigates to those duties for which they are so expressly calculated—(here he read a part). If this plan had been adopted, these shameful contracts for armed ships would have been unnecessary, and our convoys would have been protected. As it was, only 19 of one convoy were taken and carried into Spanish and French ports; and even between Spithead and the Downs, a very rich West Indianman had been taken by the enemy's privateers. The system of gun-boats was much derided, and we were told they were of no use whatever. Another official document however would shew that such was not exactly the opinion of the Admiralty, for they had actually contracted for 20 gun-brigs; but to make even this paltry number as ridiculous as they wished us to believe them, the time limited for their completion is, half in three months, and the remainder in six. Good God! if they were of no use, why build them at all? but if they were of use, why not build more, and in the shortest time possible? As it is, in 6 months the project of Buonaparté must have either

succeeded or have completely failed. They talk of the nature of these vessels, and of their force. He did understand that one of the most scientific officers in the service, had not only laid his own ideas but the plans of his father, who certainly was, without exception, not only as good an officer, but as accomplished a mechanic and ship builder, as ever was known; and when he mentioned the name of the late Sir Charles Knowles no person would deny it. This great officer's plans were shewn to the Admiralty. What was the answer? Not very gracious, perhaps but very true. One lord said he was not competent to judge; the other said he knew nothing of ship-building; this might be so, and it was not actually necessary that either a lord of the Admiralty or a captain should be ship-builders; but at least it was a sort of cousin-german duty to their own, and they ought not to talk of want of experience when they were so ignorant themselves. As to the motions made by his right hon. friend, (Mr. Pitt) he certainly should give them his support; but, if he had a fault to find with them, it was that they did not extend far enough; He wished to see an inquiry into the treatment of the officers and men into every part of the naval system, into the situation and state of the ships, into the state of the dock yards, and into the want of stores and artificers for of these last, he understood, there was a defalcation of 800 shipwrights less than the usual war establishments. This he wished to see made from no personal motives against the noble lord at the head of the Admiralty, on the contrary, he had before disclaimed such motives, and he believed he held the character of that noble lord in as high respect, and was better acquainted with it than those who pretended to be such warm partizans in his favour. This inquiry would either prove the negligence and incapacity of the Admiralty, or place their fame so high as not to be touched by the breath of slander. Upon these heads, however, he should not enlarge, as they were extraneous to the motion before the House—not but he held papers on this subject, which might make the House start. These contained subjects, which, even in that House, were too dreadful, and too delicate to state publicly. But this he did not hesitate to affirm; and he begged the House to remember, that he warned them of it; that if the present system was pursued, whoever might be at the Admiralty, if this system is not immediately changed, the most dreadful, the most fatal calamity that ever happened to this country might be expected.

Sir Edward Pellen,—Sir; as I very sel-

dom trouble the House, I hope I may be permitted to make a few observations on a subject of which, from the professional experience I have had, I may be presumed to have some knowledge. From the debate of this night, there is one piece of information I have acquired, that the French have got upwards of a thousand vessels at Boulogne. I am glad to find they are shut up there; we have one advantage in it, we know where they are; I wish we had any means of knowing when they intended to come out. I know this much, however, that they cannot all get out in one day, or in one night either; and when they do come out, I trust that our cockle shells alone, as an hon. admiral who called a very manageable and very active part of our force, will be able to give a good account of them. Sir, I do not really see, in the arrangement of our naval defence, any thing to excite the apprehensions of even the most timid among us; on the contrary, I see every thing that may be expected from activity and perseverance, to inspire us with confidence. I see a triple naval bulwark composed of one fleet acting on the enemy's coast, of another consisting of heavier ships stationed in the Downs, ready to act at a moment's notice, and a third close to the beach, capable of destroying any part of the enemy's flotilla that should escape the vigilance of the other two branches of our defence. I beg pardon for troubling the House, but accident brought me here, and I intend that my stay should be as short as possible.—In respect to what has been said of building ships by contract, I must confess I do not much admire that mode of keeping up our navy. I have seen some of them (I particularly allude to the *Ajax* and *Achilles*) that I took for Frenchmen.—As to these gun-boats which have been so strongly recommended, this musquito fleet, they are the most contemptible force that can be employed; gun-brigs, indeed, are of some use, but between a gun-brig and a gun-boat there is almost as much difference as between a man of war and a frigate. I have lately seen half a dozen of them lying wrecked upon the rocks.—As to the possibility of the enemy being able in a narrow sea to pass through our blockading and protecting squadrons with all that secrecy and dexterity and by those hidden means that some worthy people expect, I really, from anything that I have seen in the course of my professional experience, am not much disposed to concur in it. I know, Sir, and can assert with confidence, that our navy was never better found, that it was never better supplied, and

that our men were never better fed or better clothed. Have we not all the enemy's ports blockaded, from Toulon to Flushing? Are we not able to cope, any where, with any force the enemy dares to send out against us? and do we not even out-number them at every one of those ports we have blockaded? It would smack a little of egotism, I fear, were I to speak of myself; but, as a person lately having the command of six ships, I hope I may be allowed to state to the House how I have been supported in that command. Sir, during the time that I was stationed off Ferroll, I had ships passing from the fleet to me every three weeks or a month, and so much was the French commander shut up in that port deceived by these appearances, that he was persuaded, and I believe is to this very hour, that I had twelve ships under my command, and that I had two squadrons to relieve each other, one of six inside, and another of six outside."

Admiral *Berkeley* explained. He could not possibly suppose that our naval force was inadequate to the task of totally discomfiting the whole force of the enemy, if they came fairly out to them: but he meant to say, that they never could possibly have collected in the force in which they now are, if we had had a sufficient number of gun-boats to run in shore, and attack them in shoal water, where they frequently escaped from our large vessels, on account of their drawing too much water to be able to pursue them in shore.

Mr. *Wilberforce* said, that, undoubtedly, the question now before the House was extremely interesting to every member of that House, and to every individual in the country, and upon which he was anxious to say what he felt. He wished to enter upon this question as a representative of the people of England should, and as the people of England, or he mistook them, expected their representatives to do; and in beginning, he would say, that in his opinion, there would be an end to the security of this country, if subjects like the present were not treated with a becoming gravity in that House: this was what the people of England had a right to expect from that House, and did expect from that House. He did not think that the right hon. gent. (Mr. Tierney), who followed his right hon. friend (Mr. Pitt), had been happy in the choice of the manner in which he had treated this subject to-night. He confessed, that the manner in which he took up the subject, the tone in which he spoke of it, the temper with which he discussed it, the epithets he bestowed upon it, the character he gave to the motive with which it was brought forward, (and what

was of more importance than the character of any man's motive?) the manner in which he passed over the important crisis in which this business was discussed, were all of them, in his judgment, injudiciously managed by the right hon. gent. We were in a state of difficulty and danger which required great fortitude and judgment, in which the members of that House should discuss important questions gravely and sedately. But what would the public think of them, what comments would they make upon the debates of that House, if they were to hear such topics as were brought forward by the right hon. gent. in answer to his right hon. friend? The right hon. gent. seemed to think that he had some ground of reflection upon his right hon. friend, by saying he ought to be content with being a leader in the volunteer system of our defence by land, and that he should not intermeddle with our naval defence; what was this but admitting, although the right hon. gent. did not intend it, that his right hon. friend's mind, could not be confined to one species of defence for his country, or with one sort of force or means for its security, but that he was capable of assisting his country by his wisdom in council, his energy of thought, and his activity in execution; first to raise and qualify the mighty mass of volunteers for the essential protection of their country in the hour of peril, should that event arise; but after accomplishing a system for that purpose, then to endeavour to render the exertions of such a force unnecessary, by maturing the still more immediate and most natural system of defence to this country, and which went still more with the hearts of the people of it,—its naval force. It did, therefore seem to him, that the very statement of the motion of his right hon. friend was of itself a sufficient illustration of its importance and of its propriety. He should have wished, as he had hoped, it had been discussed nakedly, and simply, and plainly, and put to the good sense of the House, instead of being mixed with matter which appeared to him to be foreign to it. He did not distinctly understand the ground on which the right hon. gent. had put his opposition to this motion. He could have understood him if he had put it upon the absolute impropriety of asking any questions upon this subject at the present moment, of the propriety of abstaining from all inquiry, and of confiding in the first lord of the Admiralty, whose merits, Mr. *Wilberforce* said, he was perfectly ready to acknowledge; yet he was of opinion, that the services of that distinguished person, however great, were not to be urged as rea-

sons against entering upon the inquiry to which these motions led. However, the right hon. gent., besides stating as an objection that which was no objection at all, had also stated something that had the appearance of objection, by saying there was an imprudence in these motions, because disadvantages would arise from the inquiry to which they led. Now, if that right hon. gent. could prove that sufficient exertions had been made, no inquiry would be necessary, and the right hon. gent. himself had admitted, that if the motion was granted, there would then be strong reason for going into an inquiry. Now, there were two things to be considered upon the present occasion: first, as to the danger of inquiry, which the right hon. gent. had hinted at, by which he presumed was meant, the danger of publicity in such a case as this. To this he asked, in his turn, whether the House had not means of avoiding that publicity which was supposed to be so dangerous? Could not the House appoint a committee of secrecy? Was the House so entirely destitute of means of making inquiry that they must let matters go on as they may, though they thought them injurious to the country, for fear of giving information to the enemy? He thought that we were in no such dilemma, he thought that means might be found, if necessary, of making this inquiry, without any of that publicity which appeared to the right hon. gent. so dangerous. But what was the alternative? If there had not been a sufficient degree of exertion used in bringing forward the best mode of naval defence for this country, what was to be done?—must we continue to go on in a defective mode of defence, rather than risk the danger of publicity in adopting a better? He owned, that between the two, he found no difficulty in taking his choice, and he must say, that a *prima facie* case had been made out for the inquiry, nor had he heard any solid reason given, or even a *prima facie* case made out against such an inquiry. Another argument used by the right hon. gent. was, that perfect content reigned throughout the whole country with regard to the merit of our naval service. He was aware that here he trod on delicate ground, and he would abstain from saying a word upon that subject, if he did not think he should betray the duty he owed to the people of this country, if he past it over. Every man must speak of discontent at the conduct of any department of government, as it might appear to prevail generally among those with whom he had an opportunity of conversing, and his opinion must be formed from what he

heard from such men and from the opinion he might entertain of the means of information and judgment of such persons. The subject of content or discontent with the conduct of any department under govt. must be thus considered, and thus had he been endeavouring to consider this subject, and he must say to the House, that he had not found a single professional man in the navy, who had not professed himself privately and confidently to him in the highest degree dissatisfied with the conduct of the Admiralty. Every one with whom he conversed upon that subject, had expressed himself extremely dissatisfied with the general system of conduct pursued by the board of Admiralty in this war. He had asked professional men of different habits, of different classes of life, in the profession of the navy, of different attachment to parties, and of different connexions in life; some of them of the highest rank, gained, as he wished men might always, to a given extent, gain high stations, where there was no objection to gain on the score of ability, by the influence of those with whom they had the good fortune to associate; he had conversed with another class of men who always were, and always would be respected by every body, those who had advanced to high stations purely by their own personal merit; from all of whom he had received one and the same general answer. He had made it his business to consult persons not only of the highest rank, but also of as long experience, and as intimate acquaintance with naval subjects as, perhaps, any person in the service, and he must declare, that the terms he just now used, were milder than any he heard from these officers; the terms he used, were not only milder, but they were weak in comparison to those used by such officers to signify their discontent at the system adopted by the present board of Admiralty with reference to the naval service of this country. This he would declare most solemnly, if he were giving evidence upon the subject in a court of justice. This was justified by communications that were made to him from persons to whom general credit was due from all sides of that House.—As to the argument that Parliament gave the noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty no more than 100,000 seamen, there was nothing in it; for if Parliament gave the noble Lord no more than 100,000 seamen, it was because he asked for no more; and here he could not help wishing that the gallant admiral on the other side of the House (Admiral Berkeley) might not be right, when he said that the 15,000 marines were included in the 76,000 seamen

mentioned by the right hon. gent.; but be that as it may, it was no defence to the Admiralty that 100,000 seamen was the whole number which Parliament granted, for had the Admiralty Board asked for any additional number, or even twice the number, Parliament would have granted them; but it had been a thousand times stated in that House, that the exact number of seamen voted was never to be considered as that exact definite number to be raised or to be employed, but that as many of them were to be employed as could be obtained, if wanted; and, therefore, although this same vote was only 100,000 seamen, yet if there had been raised and employed 130,000, 140,000, or 150,000, if wanted, there would have been no difficulty about having a vote for them; it was, therefore, no defence of the noble lord to say, that Parliament granted no more seamen than 100,000.—His right hon. friend had also stated, that as to line of battle ships, the customary mode of having them built in merchants' yards had not been resorted to, and that in this change of system a considerable number of slips in the merchants' yards on the river were entirely unoccupied. This objection of his right hon. friend to the conduct of the Admiralty, required a much better answer than it had received: it required an answer very different from that observation which was made upon it by the right hon. gent., who said, it smelt of a contract; his right hon. friend's mind and manner of life were such, as to render such an observation wholly inapplicable to him, for he had never been remarkable for any connexion of this sort; this was a sort of insinuation by which he believed the right hon. gent. upon reflection, would not abide.—As to the idea that ships built by contract were ill-built, he must observe, if they were so, it must be the fault of the Admiralty, for they could prevent any imposition of that sort upon the public by merely doing their duty, by taking care that these matters were duly inspected at fit seasons and occasions; and, therefore, when gentlemen said such ships were ill-built, they only published the negligence of the Admiralty. But it must not be supposed that two ships of the line happening to be ill-built, must be taken as proof that all ships built by contractors were bad: it must be recollected, that in the course of 7 years peace, not less than 20 ships of the line had been built in the merchants' yards before the late war, and now when there was most occasion for promptness and expedition, the old system was departed from, and another adopted, by which

that expedition was lost. All those advantages were given up without any adequate exertions in the King's dock-yards; but what was still worse than all the rest was, that which was stated by the gallant Admiral on the other side of the House (Admiral Berkeley) which was, that the present number of artificers in the King's dock-yards was 800 short of its usual and necessary complement; for he understood the hon. admiral to have said, that the King's dock-yards were short of their complement of shipwrights by 800; and this was the period, and these were the circumstances when the Board of Admiralty thought fit to abandon the system of building ships of war in the docks of the merchants! He declared from the bottom of his heart, there was not a man existing for whom he felt more respect than he did for the noble lord at the head of the Admiralty. No man's services had been more signal, nor any whose talents appeared to him to be superior in his profession; but all this was no reason why the documents now moved for, should not be laid on the table of that House, and if it was seen that my Lord St. Vincent had conducted himself meritoriously in his present as in his former character, the House would take much pleasure in doing justice to his character; but he must protest against the doctrine laid down by the right hon. gent., that we were to wait until some disaster happened before we instituted any inquiry: we could not afford such a speculation; the business of that House was to prevent, not to wait for disaster, for if they waited for it, the loss might become irreparable; the only way he knew to prevent disaster, was to inquire into those circumstances which appeared likely to lead to it, in order to apply a remedy for the impending evil. The course recommended by the right hon. gent. was too full of hazard; the stake was too large to play a game so desperate. Upon the whole of this matter, he felt himself bound to declare, that he was fully convinced of the propriety of all the motions which had been stated by his right hon. Friend.

Mr. *Sheridan*.—It was my intention, Sir, to wait until I should hear the opinions of professional men on this subject; but the observations which have been made by the hon. member who has just sat down, urge me to obtrude myself to your notice thus prematurely, and contrary to my original intention. The hon. gent. has, in my mind, used observations the most unwarrantable on parliamentary grounds I have ever heard in this House. He has stated, that he has never had conversation with any naval officer, whose

opinion has not been decidedly in contradiction to the system upon which the naval affairs of the country have been for some time back conducted; that is to say, since the gallant admiral, who now presides at the head of the Admiralty Board, was appointed to that high station; and this information so obtained, he offers to the House as a justification for the censure which the advocates for the motion before the House would attach to the character of the noble lord at the head of the Admiralty. The hon. gent. ventures to tell the House, that upon grounds such as these, there is a sufficient reason for the inquiry, and for granting the papers required; but from whom has the hon. gent. obtained the intelligence, and heard the sentiments to which he thinks the House ought to attach so much importance?—from officers, no doubt, who are ashore, and unemployed, from those who have not the best opportunity of judging, and whose judgment for many reasons is not entitled to the first attention; but not from such officers as those whom the House has heard this night, not from such as the gallant admiral who preceded the hon. gent. to whom I am now alluding, and who has attracted my notice by statements which I am inclined to think he has collected from persons such as I have described, from those whose accounts of the condition of the navy naturally receive a colouring from their own situation. Thus the hon. gent. would persuade us to found our verdict, on an occasion so important as that now before us, upon evidence drawn from such sources, upon second-hand assertions, in a word upon mere hearsay. The hon. gent. is no doubt a conscientious man, he certainly so considers and describes himself, and we cannot give him any credit at all if we do not believe him to be so, and I would appeal to his conscientiousness whether he does think that any court of justice, and this House is now called upon to act in that capacity, would pronounce sentence in any case upon evidence of the nature of that upon which he seems to rely? I say that there is no court that would attend to, much less believe such assertions. If the hon. gent. has any charge to urge against the noble lord against whom the motion before the House appears to be pointed, I say, let the evidence be brought forward; but don't let accusations be insinuated or sent abroad, unsupported by any witnesses whatever, unjustified by any fact, and excused only by a loose statement, that such and such officers, whom no one ventures to name, are much in the habit of speaking ill of the conduct of the Admiralty, and of the character of its prin-

cipal director. The hon. gent. however, has told us, that he entertains a very sincere respect for this noble lord; and, really, here I must remark, that I never heard of any public charge for whom men are more forward to profess respect, nor one that is so much respected, and yet so much aspersed. The grounds of the respect are, however, notorious, while those of the aspersion are not pretended to rest upon more than hearsay evidence, which is surely not sufficient to induce this House to acquiesce in a motion that has no other object in view, than to convey an imputation upon one of the most gallant and meritorious characters this country has ever produced. For such a purpose, I will never give my vote. I will not consent to the grant of a single slip of paper, however plausible the pretence for demanding it, that may lead to an inquiry for which there exists no necessity whatever; to enter into which would imply a suspicion for which there is not the shadow of excuse, and import an accusation for which there is not the slightest ground. I would ask the right hon. mover of this proposition, what are the reasons, for he certainly has not stated any, which have provoked him to alter his sentiments with respect to the noble lord who was the subject of such warm panegyric, upon the first accession of the present ministers to office; and who, I would be curious to know, does the right hon. gent. think more adequate to the high station he fills; whom would he recommend to succeed him? If the right hon. gent. did pronounce the splendid panegyric to which I have alluded upon this noble lord, upon light grounds, he was certainly very censurable, for he was, as it were, giving a false character, and that of a great public servant; but it was well known that those grounds were not light, they rested upon the highest public services, and were supported by the warm and unanimous applauses of the country. Why then have the right hon. gent. or the hon. gent. who spoke last changed their opinions? Why have they altered their sentiments of the noble lord? Has any thing occurred since to induce or justify the change? I challenge them to take the most minute retrospect of the conduct of the noble lord since his appointment to the presidency of the Admiralty. I call upon them to re-trace all his steps, and to point out one reason why he has forfeited their confidence. I mean such a reason as this House would recognize as sufficient to justify the proposed inquiry. What facts have they in their power to produce? I am satisfied they have none, and therefore I will resist the proposition; and this is the first instance

in which it has happened that I have felt it my duty to oppose a motion for inquiry. Indeed, on every such motion heretofore that I recollect, particularly during the administration of the right hon. gent. by whom the present motion is submitted to the House, ample grounds were laid to demand inquiry; but in this instance I am of opinion that the demand is unsupported, not merely by common sense, but common decency. I do not intend to attribute improper motives to the right hon. mover; but I beg to ask him, what good can he accomplish by the production of papers respecting the state of our navy in a former war? What are his views? Does he mean to institute a comparison between Lord St. Vincent and Lord Spencer? To ascertain which of the two is better qualified to manage our naval concerns? I cannot see the purpose of such a contrast. It cannot tend to any good object. Indeed I am confident, that if a stranger were to observe the whole of this proceeding, he would not hesitate to pronounce that it could be only actuated by factious and party motives. This I am the more strongly inclined to believe from the statements of the gallant officer (Sir E. Pellew), which was quite a satisfactory reply to all the arguments that have been advanced this evening, and a full refutation of the calumnies that have been for some time back propagated relative to the condition of our navy. In that speech, which applied as forcibly to the heart as the understanding, the hon. baronet manifested not only that sincerity and frankness which is the general characteristic of that profession of which he forms so bright an ornament, and which never fails to interest any man capable of feeling, but also a considerable share of acuteness and judgment; he made some very pertinent remarks upon the nature of those gun-boats which seem to be such favourites of the right hon. gent. who brought forward this motion, but of which the hon. bart. does not appear at all to approve; and from my own observation, I certainly am disposed to agree with that hon. baronet, who is much more competent to judge upon the subject than the right hon. gent. or any other statesman. I am not surprised that these gun-boats should be treated with so much contempt by naval men. I have happened to see something of them myself, by accident, in the course of the last war on the south coast, and they really appeared to me to be quite unfit to render any material service in the way of attack or defence; indeed some of them were incapable of firing a shot. It is known that out of the 120 gun-

boats which the right hon. gent. had in commission at the close of the last war, there were scarcely any retained as at all useful, and that 62 of them, which were purchased from contractors, were much the worst. Enough has been said by the hon. bart. of the kind of vessels which contractors generally built; and, without referring to the ships of the line, of which the hon. bart. has taken notice, in proof of the badness of materials and the inferiority of their workmanship, I shall only remark on these gun-boats. I do not, indeed, like to dwell on the misconduct of inferior officers in any department. I do not wish to hear of such persons in this House; we should look always to the heads of those departments as the persons answerable to us. The navy board may be suspected of having played into the hands of the contractors during the last war; and to that, perhaps, was owing the great inferiority of the right hon. gent.'s gun-boats—an inferiority which was certainly very glaring, for out of the 120, 87 were sold, after advertisement, for almost nothing; some which could not be disposed of were retained, and six were sent to Jersey, which were found so utterly useless, that Captain D'Auvergne knew not what to do with them. He, however, sent five of them home some time after, and was obliged to send some of his best cruisers to tow them safely. Yet this is the kind of force which the right hon. gent. would recommend in preference to any other to defend our coast! It reminds me of an anecdote of the right hon. gent.'s administration, when 3 men of war were sent to this country from Portugal, which was our ally; those ships were found to be so incapable of giving us any assistance, but, on the contrary, were so little sea-worthy, that it was determined to send them home, and it became absolutely necessary to dispatch one of our frigates with them as a convoy. Such shipping would of course be rather an incumbrance to us; and the gun-boats, to which the right hon. gent. is so partial, would, from all that I have heard abroad, which is corroborated by the hon. bart. this night, be rather injurious on the score of expense, and the number of men they would necessarily require, than likely to be serviceable.—An hon. admiral on the lower bench (Admiral Berkeley) has, in the course of a very extraordinary speech, stated, that he had delivered in a plan to the Admiralty, which, if acted upon, must effectually secure our own coast, and completely destroy the flotilla of the enemy. The gallant admiral has detailed to the House some parts of

a plan which he tells us is the production of his own brain, and doubtless it is, from the specimen he has given us, a tolerably strong proof of his gallantry to own it. Without pretending to much nautical knowledge, one might, I think, question the correctness of the hon. admiral's ideas upon this project, for the practicability of making use of gun-boats to annoy the flotillas on the French coast was denied by every intelligent naval officer; but, whatever is their use in the shoals along that coast, they surely are incapable of any degree of utility, comparable to that which may be derived from large shipping upon our own coast. Wherever the latter can be employed, the former must be comparatively useless. It is notorious that, all along from Pevensey to Dungeness, a man of war can anchor close in shore, such is the depth of water. This, therefore, is the description of force upon which I would place my confidence, either for attack or defence. As to the former, who can entertain a doubt that, if the French gun-boats should venture out, and the slightest breeze should arise, that Capt. Markham, whom I mention not as a member of Parliament, for that I know would be irregular, but as a naval officer, that Sir Ed. Pellew, Sir T. Troubridge, or in fact, any officer known in our naval records, would not, with a single 74, shoot through and sink a crowd of that contemptible craft.—With respect to the number of seamen and marines now employed, it has been stated by the right hon. gent. on the Treasury Bench, that there were 98,000, which is only 2,000 short of the whole amount voted; but the hon. gent. who spoke last is still dissatisfied. He says that there ought to be more men. He does not seem to recollect, that the vote of the House limited the Admiralty; and that it was at the time that vote was made the hon. gent's objections would be most timely and proper. That was the period to consider the amount of the force necessary to maintain the war. The Admiralty had thought 100,000 men sufficient, and it appeared that they were right, notwithstanding the hon. gent.'s disapprobation. They had, and it was not the least of their merit, collected this vast force in the space of 12 months, notwithstanding the number of our other descriptions of force, and without interrupting the active employment of our population, in the various avocations of commerce, manufactures, and agriculture. To the observations of the right hon. gent., on the propriety of building ships in merchants' dock yards, I trust enough has been said by the hon. bart. (Sir Ed. Pellew), at whose presence this night the House has reason to

rejoice, to convince the right hon. gent. of his error, and also to shew him that his partiality to gun-boats is not quite so judicious as he imagined. After what the hon. bart. has urged on this point, I should hope the right hon. gent. will no longer attempt to maintain his argument, unless he be influenced by such magnanimity, that he would not wish to oppose the French gun-boats by any but their own matches. I have heard a right hon. gent. on the lower bench (Mr. Windham) often deplore that "the age of chivalry was gone;" but surely that complaint can no longer be repeated, if the right hon. mover of the proposition before the House shall continue to manifest a wish rather to oppose gun-boats to those of the French, than to see a crowd of them run down by an English 74. This would be something like the feeling which I am sure would influence the right hon. gent. on the lower bench, if, in passing through the street, he should happen to see two men engaged of unequal size and strength. The right hon. gent. would immediately interest himself for the weaker party, and call into action that science for which he is so distinguished, to release, and perhaps to avenge him.—To be serious; it is absurd to say, that we should at once give up that formidable description of naval force, in which we have always found our strength and our glory, and take up another which is condemned, not merely by the experience to which I have already referred, but by the judgment of the most respectable naval officers. That this change too should be chosen, as the right hon. gent. recommended, merely in order to reduce us to a level with the French boats, for no other argument to support the choice has been advanced, really surprises me. It is something like this, that if we had a stone wall to defend us against the shot of an enemy, it should be recommended to us to throw down the wall and fling stones at our assailants. An anecdote has been very generally mentioned with respect to the right hon. gent. who has commenced this debate: It is said that he proposed this sentiment—"The Volunteers, and a speedy meeting with the enemy on our own shores." This toast, I understand, was proposed among a number of volunteer officers above 6 months ago, at a time when the volunteers, upon whom we are so much to rely for our security, could not be much acquainted with discipline, if, according to the right hon. gent.'s assertion, they are even now very defective in that respect. I am as ready as any man to pay a just compliment to the right hon. gent.'s active endeavours to pro-

mote the improvement of the volunteers. I acknowledge that his solicitude for their advancement and glory is considerable, and probably he wishes to remove any impediment in their way. His desire is, perhaps, that they should have a full opportunity of distinguishing themselves pursuant to the toast I have quoted. If such be his view, he certainly could not accomplish it by better means than by contriving to have the defence of our country committed to his favourite gun-boats, instead of men of war. Independently of the other objections which I have offered to those gun-boats, there is one which occurs to me of too much strength to be omitted. If they were of the same kind as those of the last war, any description of men would be good enough, or too good, for them; and if good men were required for them, they could not be had without deducting from the number necessary for our important shipping. Why, then, join with the corrupt band of detected speculators in censuring the Admiralty for not paying all the attentions which the right hon. gent. desired to these gun boats? A little consideration ought to be sufficient to prevent any man from complaining of that respectable Board—that Board which is respectable in the estimation of all men but mistaken partisans or fraudulent contractors—that Board which has had such numerous difficulties to encounter, all incurred by a solicitude to expose and punish fraud, to recover and to spare the public money. Has the right hon. gent. read the five reports from the commissioners appointed to inquire into the abuses committed in the several branches of the naval department? If so, has he not there seen the foul corruption, the abominable artifice, with which the Admiralty has had to struggle? Has the right hon. gent. observed the frauds exposed in the second report—the block and coopers' contracts, where 2,000*l.* have been paid for work proved not to be worth 200*l.*? Has he read the description of the plunder practised on seamen by the prize-agents; and if so, can he, can any man who loves the friends of his country and virtue, refuse his gratitude and admiration to the first lord of the Admiralty who originated this inquiry? an inquiry which has irritated against him a host of enemies. They are enemies, however, which that noble lord must despise. It was but the prejudice of defeated vice against triumphant virtue. It could not disturb the noble lord's mind. While he was only assailed by those worms who had fed and fattened upon the corruption of the navy—while he had only to reckon as his foes those who had proved themselves hostile to

honour and justice, who had enriched themselves on the spoils of their country—while such only were his enemies, the noble lord would proceed in his course of glory as he did in the victory on the memorable 14th of February, 1797, disdaining and declining to retaliate their attack; but when the right hon. author of the motion before the House becomes his assailant, the noble lord must feel surprised. Even the right hon. gent. however, cannot injure him. His fame stands too high, his character is too firmly established, to be hurt by the assertions of any member, and I have no doubt that the noble lord will be ever found entitled to the applause and protection of his country—With regard to the right hon. gent's recommendation, that shipping should be built in the merchants' dock yards, I shall only refer him to the ships mentioned by the hon. bart. and also to the cases described in the reports of the commissioners of naval inquiry, particularly to the cases where it appeared that the persons who received payment for ships built in merchants' yards were clerks in the King's dock-yards. Is it possible to suppose that collusions did not exist in such cases as these? The right hon. gent. has said, that it is impossible, during war, to build any number of ships in the King's dock-yards, and that therefore a necessity arises of resorting to the merchants' yards. What a melancholy expression—that in those yards, where there are 3,200 men employed, nothing more than the mere repair of ships could be done! If so, then our surprise must be diminished, that a French fleet should have been permitted, in the course of the last war, to find its way to Egypt, and another French fleet to sail to Ireland, where nothing but the elements offered to prevent a formidable French army from landing. If, however, the King's dock-yards are really so little useful, or rather so useless, they ought to be abolished altogether. A new system ought to be adopted. If they could only finish in these yards 24 sail of the line, 15 frigates, and some few sloops in the course of 20 years, although it is known that 45 shipwrights can build a 74 in one year, that there are 3,200 shipwrights in those yards, and that the expense, &c. could not be less in 20 years than 4,100,000*l.*, a sum equal to the building of the whole navy of England, it follows, of course, that it is bad policy to continue the maintenance of these dock-yards. It is besides well known that the internal system of these yards is bad. There is no difference in the wages allowed to the workmen; the unskilful can earn as much as those of a different description. Thus emulation is prevent-

ed, and many advantages, of course, lost to the employers. The right hon. gent. may answer this, and say, that, although so many abuses have been detected by the commissioners of naval inquiry, that still the system of the dock-yards is good: but I assert, and am prepared to maintain the assertion, that abuses pervade every department of the system. Does the right hon. gent. know of the frauds which the commissioners have found to have been committed in every article with which these yards are furnished, particularly blocks? From these abuses arise the necessity of advertising for contractors to build shipping; and as to correct them, to produce integrity and arrangement in all the departments of the navy, is and has been the great endeavour of the high character upon whom it appears to be the object of the motion before the House to fix an imputation, I shall vote against it with as much satisfaction as ever I gave a vote since I had the honour of a seat in this House, fully convinced that such a motion is only calculated to gratify the corrupt, to frown upon reform, and to assail the reputation of a gallant officer, whose claims to the gratitude of the country can only be equalled by the esteem and attachment he enjoys among all that are great and good.

Mr. Fox.—Sir; I feel myself placed in a situation somewhat extraordinary on this occasion. With a great part of what has been said on the merits of the first lord of the Admiralty, I am strongly disposed to concur, but at the same time, I cannot see how these arguments tended to the conclusion at which they arrived. My hon. friend near me (Mr. Sheridan) has made, as he always does, a speech of the utmost brilliancy and eloquence, in which, however, he seems to me to have almost entirely omitted the reasons on which he was to negative the motion, and he contented himself with announcing the vote he was prepared to give. Though ready to give my ready assent to the distinguished worth and pre-eminent services of Lord St. Vincent, I feel that the best way I can testify my respect for such a character, is to give my vote for the motion. I feel that a slur thrown on the reputation of Earl St. Vincent, would be a loss to the country, and to remove every suspicion of that kind, I say, let there be ample means of inquiry afforded, so that the triumph of Lord St. Vincent may be the more complete, satisfactory and glorious. It appears to me that the defenders of Lord St. Vincent had but two courses which they could with propriety pursue, either to say that no case whatever had been made out, and then refuse all the pa-

pers asked, or to produce all the papers which could reasonably be asked for, and upon the consideration of those to call for the censure or the acquittal of the House. But the line of conduct which ministers have thought fit to take, does neither the one or the other. By granting some papers and refusing others, they admit enough to countenance the suspicion of something wrong in the naval administration, and do not go far enough to let that suspicion be wiped away. But the course which ministers have thought fit to adopt it is not difficult to explain. They wish to defend Lord St. Vincent as they would have defended themselves; they wish to put him on a level with them, to obtain the precedent of his great name to resist inquiry, so that every other inquiry may be frustrated; they wish to put him on a level with Lord Hardwicke, so that the refusal of inquiry in the instance of one that can bear it, may be an argument for setting inquiry aside when it might tend to produce discoveries they would suppress. The right hon. gent. who spoke first (Mr. Tierney) against the motion, agrees that the papers alluded to in two of the motions shall be granted; but he is of opinion that the third cannot be granted. If, however, to ask for any papers at all be to cast some slur on the first lord of the Admiralty, why are any papers granted at all? Or is it because those which are refused might lead to inquiry, that they are withheld? If this be the object of the defenders of Lord St. Vincent, I am confident that he must disclaim such a mode of proceeding. I am confident that he would countenance no shuffling or evasion to suppress inquiry; and that he would not be content if he thought that it could be suspected he was adverse to have his administration canvassed. Thus ministers, knowing that the conduct of the first lord of the Admiralty is in every respect a contrast to their own, wish to make common cause with him, in offering a mode of defence to which, on a future occasion, they themselves may resort. Towards Lord St. Vincent I feel much personal friendship, and this renders me anxious that his reputation should stand high; but public motives give me a still greater interest in his fame and honour. Of his glorious achievement on the 14th of February no man can think higher than I do; but his conflict with the abuses and corruptions of his department appears to me, though less brilliant, not less arduous and meritorious. On the 14th of February he engaged and vanquished the enemy; but he has waged a war no less difficult, with jobs, and contracts, and frauds. He has broken their em-

battled line, no less arduous than to penetrate that of the enemy. My admiration of him is increased to find him possess, in so high a degree, that which is more rare than gallantry in the field: civil courage and decision as well as personal courage. I feel that his virtues and public deserts in this contest with corruption have naturally led to that obloquy by which he has been pursued. The attempt to put to rout the hosts of corruption must have created him enemies. Such may have been the persons from whom an hon. gent. opposite (Mr. Wilberforce) obtained the information he mentioned; but let the miserable witnesses be brought forward, that their testimony may be examined and disproved. This calls to my mind an anecdote of a risible nature. It happened that when Mr. Justice Willes, a man who to many eminent qualities added a considerable portion of humour, was one day employed in trying a cause, I believe of murder, and one of the witnesses deposed that a ghost had said so and so;—"O, very well, (said the judge), I have no objection to the evidence of a ghost; let him be brought in and sworn!" So, provided the witnesses alluded to by the hon. gent. can be brought forward, I have no objection to receive their evidence at the bar of the House, that we may afterwards decide upon it.—During the whole course of the debate, the only person who has made any direct charge against the conduct of the Admiralty in general, is my hon. and gallant relation, (Admiral Berkeley), who spoke lately. As to the right hon. gent. who made the motions, I confess, that he seems to me to have made out little or no case. With respect to the number of gun-boats in employment now and at former periods, the comparison affords no conclusion, unless it be shewn likewise that the exigency of the case was such, as to demand greater exertions and a greater proportion of this species of force. Unless too it can be shewn, that of gun-brigs a greater number ought to be employed, the late period at which the Admiralty made the contracts for such vessels proves nothing. The right hon. gent. likewise proposes to address the Crown, recommending greater exertions in this way; but any measures for the improvement of our defence must be left to those who are in official situations. But in viewing our state of defence, the great mind of the right hon. gent. must see that it must be judged of upon a general system, and not upon any particular point. It is impossible, but, that in viewing each point separately, there must appear to be some deficiency. It is evident, however, that some inferior parts must be

overlooked, in order that the perfection of the whole may be obtained; and I am inclined to think, that if there be any part of our defence which it was more safe to sacrifice than another, from its being of inferior moment, it is that of which the right hon. gent. has insisted. Had the motion been for papers generally, I might have been a little puzzled to know how I should vote, though I believe I still should have voted for inquiry; but as the matter stands now I cannot hesitate. If the papers are refused, it must infer some slur upon the first lord of the Admiralty; if some of these documents are withheld, it may be said by the right hon. gent., that he was prevented from carrying the question he meant to move, because inquiry was suppressed, and he was denied the papers by which his case was to be proved. But, it is said, that if all the papers were granted, a suspicion would lie against the first lord of the Admiralty. But how long could such a suspicion continue? No longer, surely, than till the inquiry took place. But if any suspicion arises from the motion, or from the papers produced, it is impossible to say how long suspicion may remain, since no inquiry is allowed by which it can be removed. Ministers profess themselves friends of lord St. Vincent in the present instance; but how have they shewn themselves solicitous about the fame and the accommodation of that noble lord on other occasions? Do we not know, that, for at least eighteen months, a difference of the most serious kind, and to the impediment of public business, existed between the first lord and the secretary of the Admiralty? yet, that secretary preserved his place for a year and a half, under those very ministers who lately contended, that on account of a coolness between the lord lieut. of Ireland and the commander in chief there, it was impossible that the latter could, consistently with the public safety, remain in his place a week. I cannot help thinking, therefore, that the defence now set up by ministers, as rather intended to be a convenient protection to themselves for the future, than as any thing which Lord St. Vincent's case would require. If Lord St. Vincent's conduct, which would stand inquiry, is to be opposed to any inquiry, then will others avail themselves of the example, to contend that they too, though they declined investigation, were equally conscious of rectitude and merit. And is this the way to do honour to Lord St. Vincent's character and superiority? Indeed, that ministers look more to the benefit of the example than to the credit of the first lord of the Admiralty, appears to me from

the manner in which the motion had been opposed. It seems as if it were said, we will grant such papers as will not inculpate the first lord of the Admiralty, and do not lead to inquiry. Why, then, are others refused? Will it not be said, that they would have inculpated the Admiralty and led to inquiry? and this is the way in which Lord St. Vincent's reputation is to be defended by his colleagues. The same right hon. gent. (Mr. Tierney), to whose defence of the Admiralty I have just alluded, says too, that there is no complaint against the Admiralty out of doors; and also, that the public are equally content with the whole conduct of the present ministers. As to the general character of ministers with the public I shall give no testimony; but if the conduct of ministers were to be the object of discussion, and decided by argument, it would not be difficult to shew what the public ought to think of them. This suffer me to illustrate by a good humoured comparison, which on general principles often afford the best illustration. In one of Molière's plays, a grave old gentleman marries a young wife, or does something or other not very suitable to his character. Every body, however, is mightily content with what he had done, except that when it is mentioned every one burst out a laughing. In the same manner, though it happens that every body is so well content with the present ministers, yet when their merits are spoken of it generally produces a laugh, or at least a smile, on every countenance. Different indeed is Lord St. Vincent in this respect from all his colleagues; and knowing that he is in every respect a perfect contrast to them in merit and reputation, they wish to bring him down to their level, or at least to shelter themselves under his great authority. But in order to strengthen the public confidence in Lord St. Vincent, let the administration of the Admiralty be examined, and the services of that noble lord will appear even more important than they have yet been estimated. In voting for this motion on these grounds, I am conscious that I do that which private friendship and public duty equally prescribe.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that he did not rise to add much to the strong and convincing arguments which had been so ably urged in defence of the measures of the Admiralty, but to make a few observations on what had fallen from the hon. gent. who had just sat down. Although the hon. gent. had said, that all or none of the papers moved for ought to be granted, the House, he trusted, would see the distinction, and they would be disposed rather to acknowledge

the fairness of administration that were ready to lay before the House every information that could be granted consistently with the public safety. From every thing which he knew, from every thing which had been urged, he was satisfied that no ground had been laid for any inquiry; that no case had been made out which at all rendered it necessary that Lord St. Vincent should be put upon his defence. If, however, there can be any doubt in the minds of the public as to the efficiency of our naval defence, the papers that are to be produced will afford the fullest satisfaction. It is not difficult, therefore, to perceive the reason why some part of the papers are refused, while others are granted. As to the number of gun-vessels contracted for, he conceived that it was a good reason for refusing those papers, as, if granted, it would be necessary to go into an inquiry upon other points connected with it, from which might result much inconvenience and detriment to the public service. The same reason occurred for refusing those papers respecting the number of ships to be built in 1793 and subsequent periods, as it must branch into the same kind of details, and call for the same kind of communication. In every point, therefore, in which papers are refused, it is where it would be inconvenient for the public service to grant it, and it is granted in every case where this restraint did not exist. The hon. gent. (Mr. Fox) called himself the friend of Lord St. Vincent, and solicitous for his fame, but the hon. gent. had on former occasions professed himself the real friend of great men, and on these occasions he had always acted that part which the friends of those men did not support. When it was proposed to vote thanks to Lord Cornwallis, the hon. gent. opposed that vote, upon the ground that it was better for the reputation of that noble lord that the vote of thanks should not pass. In the same manner, professing to be the friend of Lord St. Vincent, he scrupled not to expose that noble lord to the suspicion of mal-administration by supporting a motion for inquiry, for which he admitted that no ground had been laid. I confess, however, (said Mr. A.) I intend to show my respect and friendship to Lord St. Vincent by a conduct the reverse of that of the hon. gent. With respect to the system of degrading our navy to the same level with the miserable species of naval force to which the enemy's want of means compelled them to resort, he agreed entirely with the hon. baronet, who spoke so ably. It surely would be strange indeed, if with giants at our disposal we should employ pigmies; but whenever

an inferior species of naval force was necessary, it would not be wanting. It had been already stated (by Sir E. Pellew), that on the coast of France such was the nature of the shore that no species of craft could prevent the enemy's boats creeping along. In addition to the powerful testimony of that officer, he could produce that of another naval officer (Captain Day) who had been employed by the Admiralty to examine and report his opinion as to the possibility of giving any effectual check to the communication of the enemy's gun-boats along their own shores. That officer, in a letter to the Admiralty, states, that on account of the shallowness of the French coast, and the number of batteries on shore, it was impossible for us to send any species of vessels close enough to make any material impression on the enemy; and as the enemy had horse artillery continually moving along the shore, it was impossible even to send in boats for the purpose of annoying the squadrons of the enemy's flotillas. Such was the case as to annoying the enemy on their own shores; but in every situation where our smaller vessels could be of use to the protection of our own coasts, at every fit station and exposed point from the North Foreland to Portsmouth, there was scarce a point for the defence of which ample provision had not been made. It had been said that there was a larger number of gun-boats last war; but of the value of such vessels, he had a letter in his hand from an officer of merit, (Lieut. Tokeley), which would give the House some idea. That officer states in the letter, that he was once commander of one of the Dutch vessels which had been fitted out as a gun-boat, and it was almost impossible to keep her from sinking. Twenty fine schooners had been fitted out with one 24 pounder, which did not answer, and they were armed with carronades. These vessels had commonly lain idle at Plymouth, and were good for nothing but a parade on a fine day, so that if they should have ventured so far out as the Eddystone Lighthouse they never would have returned to port had a top-gallant breeze arose. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, that of the gun-brigs, a much better kind of vessel, orders had been given for building 23 of them; but the first lord of the Admiralty, deeming it advisable to complete other vessels that were in hand, had ordered the sloops of war to be previously launched; and if more gun-brigs were not in service, it certainly was because the first lord of the Admiralty was of opinion that another and superior kind of force was preferable. It had been said,

that the number of shipwrights in the yards was 800 deficient. The fact, however, was, that more men were now in the yards than during the first year of the last war, and only 58 less than during the highest year of last war. It was to be considered, too, that as nearly 400 persons had been discharged who received 6s. a day for doing nothing, the number of efficient men now was greater than it had ever been.—But it was unnecessary for him to go further into detail which had been so much better handled. He agreed with the right hon. gent. opposite, that it was because Lord St. Vincent had shewn himself so inexorable a foe to abuses; because he had shewn himself determined to lay the axe to the root of the tree, that he had incurred so much obloquy. There were other great men engaged in the same arduous career, who had their share of that obloquy; but he was convinced that to this chiefly were complaints owing; and sometimes, perhaps, those men, from their habits of life not calculated to give grace to refusal, and to soften denial, might have excited the animosity of those whom it was impossible to gratify. The public, indeed, had a deep interest in the character of such men, and of the first lord of the Admiralty. No man was better qualified to serve the country than that noble lord.—Of him might be said, what had been said of Lord Chatham, that he had the name of an Englishman, respectable in every quarter of the globe; "*clarum et venerabile nomen*," &c. The House and the country will judge who best consult the fame of Lord St. Vincent in the present occasion, and if no ground of inquiry be laid surely nothing could be more to be deprecated, than at so critical a moment throwing suspicion on so important a branch of the public defence, and wasting the time and attention of the House upon unnecessary inquiries.

Mr. *G. Ponsonby* was sorry to see an imputation brought against his hon. friend below, that was of all others, he thought, the least likely to be brought. He would ask the right hon. gent. opposite, if he had preserved his friendship inviolate to such a degree as his hon. friend (Mr. Fox), or if he in every instance had carried his friendship to the same extent? Had his friend by him tapped the right hon. gent. on the shoulder, and bid him look behind, that right hon. gent. would have seen a quondam friend, for whom, perhaps, he had not preserved all the attachments nor all the sympathies of friendship.—Why should any wish exist to conceal the naval situation of the country? The more our state is known, the more respect will our

naval force command. He could perceive no ground of delicacy on this question, when our naval superiority was so confessedly admitted even by our enemies. The more, in fact, our naval force is known, the more we must be dreaded. Nor could such an investigation as that proposed by the motion, give greater information to the enemy than what they already possessed, which was, he conceived, an information of our superiority. He would ask the House what had been the conduct of the Admiralty, in regard to the most vulnerable part of the empire. Was it not the most judicious in every respect? Every person would admit Ireland to be that part of the empire which he had described, and the conduct of the Admiralty, in regard to Ireland, was the most satisfactory, and appeared, he could say from good authority, to those that were most interested in that part of the empire, to be best calculated for protection and security. What description of vessels did Ireland most require, or by what description of vessels had Ireland been so much satisfied? It was by large vessels that the shores of Ireland had been protected, and not by small craft, which seemed to be the object of those gentlemen to recommend; and Ireland, at the same time, it would be admitted, was the weakest part of the empire, and therefore the best criterion by which we ought to judge from experience of the best means of our defence. The hon. gent. was by no means anxious to go into comparisons, but at the same time no comparisons, he was certain, could determine in any way disadvantageous to the noble lord now at the head of the Admiralty. A force, he remembered, had hovered over the coast of Ireland for upwards of 17 days, under a former administration, with general Hoche at its head, which had not the weather prevented it from standing, might have been attended with more serious consequences, and which during those 17 days, was unmolested, or rather undiscovered by any British fleet. Were comparisons to be made, and were he permitted to follow them up minutely, he believed they would terminate greatly in favour of the present Board of Admiralty in every respect; and feeling this with his hon. friend below (Mr. Fox), he could see no rational objection to the inquiry proposed. Should such an inquiry produce any effect to the enemy, it must be that only of deterring him from his fatal and ill-founded enterprizes, it must be that only, from the present state of our navy, of convincing the enemy that successful invasion was impossible, and that the attempt must be attended with discomfiture to themselves. If any ob-

jection was entertained to the conduct of the noble lord at the head of the Admiralty, it must be on account of that aversion he has discovered to every species of corruption, and his laudable determination to check and oppose it in every shape. On this account, therefore, he was glad to see that noble lord so warmly supported by the gentleman opposite, and professedly upon the same principle, because from this circumstance it was natural to conclude, that there was no corruption existing in any of the other departments of administration, or the noble lord could not have been the only one singled out as an object of persecution in this respect. He must again repeat, that in regard to policy, there could be no objection. The more the enemy shall know, the more he will fear, and lord St. Vincent will have an opportunity of vindicating more generally his conduct. For these reasons, the hon. gent. said, he would vote for the motion, not for an address to his Majesty to remove the present lord of the Admiralty, but for an inquiry by which he would be enabled to justify his conduct.

Mr. *Sturges Bourne* was surprised that the papers now moved for should be refused, when an inquiry into the conduct of the Board of Admiralty, on a former occasion, had been so loudly challenged. Now, however, 3 out of the 5 heads of information moved for were refused expressly, because they led to an inquiry into the conduct of that Board. It was impossible that any enemy of the noble lord who presided over the Admiralty could contrive to asperse his character more than such conduct did. The Board was called on to assign a reason why they had not done as much for the defence of the country as other Boards had done in former times, and the necessary means of this inquiry were refused. One right hon. gent. (Mr. Tierney) had imputed to his right hon. friend the offence of damping the ardour of the country. He left it to the House to say, whether such was the tendency of his right hon. friend's conduct; and whether, on the contrary, he had not done every thing in his power to produce a contrary effect, and to put the country in a state of complete defence? It was also insinuated by another hon. gent. (Mr. Sheridan) that the motion had for its object to encourage and protect a set of corrupt contractors and jobbers. He appealed to the House, whether it was possible to attribute any motives of that kind to the mover? He was at a loss to conceive how the Chancellor of the Exchequer could assert, that the number of the

dock-yard men, was only 58 deficient, as if his information, on that subject were correct, the deficiency was near 1,100. He did not see any objection to giving the House accurate information on the subject, which might at some future period be moved for. It was certain that at the peace the Admiralty had reduced the number 400 below the usual peace establishment. This he thought, should not have been done till our navy, worn by the length of service, was put in a complete state of repair; and particularly when, as ministers must have known another war was impending.—Much had been said of the impolicy of building ships in private yards; he should be glad, however, to hear what new ships were now laid down in the dock-yards, or what old ones were likely to be finished. A great many ships had been built in these private yards, and now a ship or two, the *Ajax* and *Achilles*, were said to be defective, and that circumstance was gravely assigned as a reason for desisting in a long established and uniform practice.—The motive of the present motion he conceived to be to shew that our naval force was less than it ought to be. It did not confine itself to gun-boats, as it seemed to be understood, but applied equally to every degree of force large as well as small. The question seemed to be argued, as if his right hon. friend meant to call on the Board of Admiralty to dismantle the large ships, and only equip gun-boats. This was by no means his intention. Preserving all the line of battle ships and frigates, it was to be seen whether an adequate number of small craft was provided for our defence; or at least, as many as could have been produced. He admitted the great professional character of Lord St. Vincent, to which he was as inclined as any one to do justice, and also to his exertions in correcting the frauds and corruptions incident to the naval expenditures; but of his civil conduct he might possibly entertain a very different opinion. The object of the present motion related only to acts of omission. The time might come when a further, inquiry might take place into some circumstances in his conduct of actual commission, which not only affected the state of our naval defence, but was also very material with a view to the personal liberty of the subject.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, in explanation, said, that he alluded to the number of shipwrights employed in the dock-yards.

Mr. *Sturges Bourne* said, that he allud-

ed to artificers in general, and probably the difference on this subject was the best refutation of the right hon. gentleman's statement.

Sir *William Elford* spoke in favour of the motion, and thought the Admiralty had shown great severity and unbecoming rigour in their conduct. This, he thought, applied individually to the noble lord who presided at the head of the board, however meritorious he might otherwise be. People were removed from places on slight and frivolous pretences. There was in their whole conduct an extreme and ostentatious severity.

Mr. *Tyrnwhit Jones* said, that the more this question was discussed by the House, the weaker were the arguments of all its advocates. In the early part of the debate, an hon. admiral had stated, that he thought there was no exertion on the part of the Admiralty. To that he would say, let him look at the state of the marine. That hon. admiral had also said, that he suspected the motions which had been made that night, did not go far enough in regard to making inquiries. If they did not, the same hon. admiral had told the House, that he himself had something to propose, which would carry the investigation still further. For his part, he could not rightly conceive how that hon. admiral could possibly carry it farther than what had been done by the right hon. gent. who had made these motions. He thought that the present inquiry tended to nothing else than to injure the first lord of the Admiralty. Without any disparagement to the right hon. gent. (Mr. Pitt), he might venture to say, that during the whole 17 years of his administration, he had generally shown himself to be inimical to making such inquiries or entering into any investigations whatever. He, however, would, in justice to that right hon. gent., mention, that he remembered having, on one particular occasion, procured from him, with some difficulty, an old bundle of papers. He was not inclined to impute to that right hon. gent. any improper or personal motives in his proposed investigation, though he must own that it appeared somewhat curious, that he should now venture to become an accuser, and indulge himself in making motion after motion, and encouraging speech after speech, when it tended so evidently to injure others. So many motions were proposed for inquiries into the conduct of ministers, that there appeared to be no end to them. He could not bring himself to be convinced, that the right hon. gent. was really in ear-

nest on this occasion, on the contrary, he was inclined to think that he had brought such motions forward, in order to win some bet he had entered into with some of his friends. It even appeared to him, indeed, that the right hon. gent. and his coadjutors were, or had been in a similar situation, to a certain celebrated female who had lately so much attracted the notice of the public; and that he had lately been troubled with a dream. Whether he had been dreaming about stupendous columns about sugar canes, or of the western world, he could not take upon him to determine; but it seemed as if he had like the lady alluded to, thrown aside the camphor bag, and welcomed opposition to his Majesty's ministers. It really appeared that the right hon. gent. had not now a leg to stand upon. He had brought forward these motions, while, at the same time he had stated, conscientiously, that the noble lord of the Admiralty had done every thing. As for the coalitions which had been made, they seemed to have no other object than to fix disgrace upon his Majesty's own ministers; those very ministers who had in spite of all allegations to the contrary, the utmost confidence of the people of England, and who have the votes of the House to support their just and proper administration. Where, he would ask were we to look more properly than to that House for the real and confidential sentiments of the people regarding them? Had any petition been presented to the House from the inhabitants of the country begging that the conduct of the noble lord, so often alluded to, should be strictly investigated, on account of suspicions attaching to him? No. There had been no such petitions; it had been only a whisper to the detriment of the noble lord; and he was inclined to suppose, that it had been upon that whisper alone that the right hon. gent. and some members of that House seemed disposed to attack him.

Captain Markham began by saying, that it appeared necessary for him to clear up some mistakes or misrepresentations which originated in the course of the debate. The reason for having stated the number of seamen in the month of Dec. last, in preference to any other month, was, that the regular returns had been made to the Admiralty at that period. There were then 76,054 seamen on board his Majesty's navy. Since the month of Dec. no less than 6,441 had been added, and the return of the marines was 15,679. All these added together made a total of 98,174 men. Those returns were

to be found in the Admiralty and had no connexion with the Navy-Office. There were no less than 19 sloops of war contracted for, and were to be built in the month of Nov. last, and there were very sufficient reasons for gun-boats having been ordered previous to the contractors completing the sloops. It was not from an idea that these would be immediately required, but in order to be in readiness for particular purposes. As to the sloops not having been built sooner than in three months, he could confidently state that no disadvantage would result from that circumstance. It would have been very injudicious to build them in a hurry, or of raw or green wood, which always proved leaky; and he did not imagine that Buonaparte's gun-boats would be found on trial, to answer his purpose, for a similar reason. He would rather have gentlemen be inclined to a concealment than to divulge any circumstances which might prove injurious to the country. It would be necessary in the first place, to have on hand a great stock of timber, were ships to be built in merchants' yards. Those vessels which were built in the King's yards were more substantially built than others. He meant nothing personal against any individual, when he said, however, that in his opinion, a proper use had never been made of shipwrights in this country. The ships built in the King's yards, were wholesome and sound for the men to live in; those built elsewhere, were generally found to get what is called the dry rot; they inclined the men to fevers, and were soon rendered unserviceable. He might even say, that those ships which were built in merchants' yards had been the ruin of the navy. He did not know exactly what the hon. admiral meant by alluding to 19 sail being taken when under convoy; he was not aware of any such thing having ever happened. On the whole, in considering the nature of the present motions, he, for his part, must say, that personal motives were to be presumed. If the right hon. gent. or any other person had any fixed and determined charge to bring forward against the noble lord who had the direction of the naval department, he would wish rather that they should state their charges directly and openly against them, than go about in the manner they seemed inclined to do.

Sir William Curtis expressed himself to be also at a loss to know what convoy the hon. admiral had alluded to in the course of his speech, because he, too, might have had an unlucky hit among the number. He begged to know where the right hon. gent. would

wish to place his gun-boats, could a greater number be immediately procured? They were only fit for assembling to protect the coast, and he could venture to say, that merchants' vessels were never so well protected as at the present moment. In the year 1793, the number of vessels taken by the enemy was 418; in 1794, they were 484; in 1795, 493; and in 1796, there were no less than 793 vessels of various descriptions lost. He did not know what gentleman would wish to have, when we had at present fleets every where. For his part, after having heard the discussion which had taken place on this subject, he could venture to say, that he should this night repose upon his pillow with a greater degree of satisfaction than he could have done, had not the conduct of Lord St. Vincent been called in question by the present motion.

Mr. *Courtenay* said, it was highly gratifying to observe, that every one who had spoken of the noble lord at the head of the Admiralty, had done so in terms that implied there could be no doubt what would be the termination of any inquiry that might be instituted. The present question had led to a discussion which convinced every gentleman of the firm basis on which the security of the country reposed. As long as eloquence shall consist of correctness of judgment, simplicity and truth, it will be admitted that the gallant admiral under the gallery (Sir E. Pellew) has defended Lord St. Vincent with some of those rhetorical powers for which seamen are not always distinguished. He was one of those who considered, that of all others, a professional man was the most suited for the high station occupied by Lord St. Vincent; and he deemed it as absurd to place a person in different habits in that situation, as to advance a sailor or a soldier to the highest rank in the Courts of British Jurisprudence. On every ground, whether he regarded the character of the noble lord or the public welfare, he considered the present motion fit to be supported.

Mr. *Burroughs* observed, it was contended by many gentlemen, that the character of the first lord of the Admiralty was a sufficient answer to the inquiries which were the object of the present motion. Did gentlemen mean to say, that the right hon. gent. who had so long directed the councils of the state, had no character and no opinion which ought to be regarded? It was, perhaps, his own private sentiments, that the war of France is not against our navy, but against our finances; but if there be any neglect in the naval department, no doubt

can be entertained but they will avail themselves of it. It is, therefore, of the highest importance, not only that the present force may be competent, but that it may be continued in a condition adequate to the complete defence of the country. On these grounds, he considered the production of every document which could give satisfaction on this subject, prudent and necessary.

Mr. *Fonblanque* assured the House, that he would not detain it beyond a very few minutes. The motions now under consideration, were merely for the production of papers, without which an inquiry could not be instituted. If the papers were granted, then the right hon. mover would be enabled to judge, whether or not the force mentioned in the official documents, was adequate to the emergency of the times. As this appeared to be the tendency of the right hon. mover's proposition, he saw no rational grounds for the refusal of the papers necessary for the inquiry. He professed the greatest admiration of Lord St. Vincent's character, and, therefore, he could not for a moment imagine that a negative ought to be given to the motion for the papers described by the right hon. mover. The production of the papers would also be attended with this happy effect; it would tell the people what means were pursued for their defence against the enemies of the country. It would also have this salutary effect; if the House were of opinion, that the force was inadequate to the resistance of the enemy, Parliament could then see the propriety, if not necessity, of augmenting the same. With all his partiality for the noble earl, he was for the motion.

Mr. *Pitt* rose to reply. He declared, that he would endeavour to detain the House, at that late hour, as short a time possible. It must, however, be evident that he was bound to answer some of the remarks which had been brought forward. He agreed with a learned gentleman, that any vote which was given that night for the papers did not absolutely proceed the length of censuring his lordship. They were called upon to grant certain papers, deemed requisite for an inquiry into the conduct of his lordship and the hon. Board of which he was the head. They were called upon to view with the eye of candour and impartiality the merits of the case which he had represented for the consideration of the House. To grant the documents for which he moved, would be the best means of establishing the character and conduct of his lordship by the inquiry which he purposed to institute. To refuse them would create those doubts which

must always be injurious to a public character, however pure it might be considered by his friends. To refuse them would also have an evil tendency—it would serve to excite doubts as to the real strength of the nation. And what doubts? Doubts as to our capacity for the resistance of a very powerful enemy, whose visit to this country we are taught to believe will take place in the course of a very few weeks. Before such a terrible emergency arrives, all doubts ought to be removed, by the production of such papers as would demonstrate at once the real strength of the country. If these papers be deemed necessary to ascertain our capacity for the resistance of the enemy, why deny them? Is Parliament, for the sake of protecting the Board, to be left doubtful of our strength and power at this great and awful crisis? Is that very Parliament which makes a liberal expenditure for the security of the country, to be left in a state of doubt and dismay, because ministers do not chuse to gratify their moderate wishes? The greater the danger, the greater the necessity for knowing the arrangements and strength of the country at the eve of one of the most serious events about to be recorded in our history. Should the papers be refused, which, from the disposition of those connected with administration, appeared likely to be the results of his efforts, our doubts would be increased, not only respecting our capacity to meet the enemy, but our doubts would also be increased respecting the conduct of the nobleman who presided at the Admiralty. It was as much as to say, “do not inquire into our conduct, for there are certain facts which cannot bear public investigation.” It was as much as to say, “give us unlimited confidence, believe in our professions of vigilance and activity, but do not attempt to institute an inquiry, for we can never consent to such a measure.” What sort of confidence does the Board want? That blind and false confidence which exposes the safety of our country! That confidence which sacrifices our public security for the sake of screening from censure a department of government the most important at this particular period to the interests of the country. Is this the kind of security which the hon. baronet (Sir W. Curtis) boasts of as operating so powerfully on his mind, as to induce him to retire this evening, and lay down his head on his pillow with confidence. It is a dangerous and alarming confidence; a confidence which benumbs our senses, and lulls us to sleep, while the enemy is at our gates; a confidence which cannot fail to excite the most

lively emotions in the minds of men of serious reflection, when contrasting the terrible activity of the enemy with the alarming supineness of our government. Some gentlemen, under the immediate influence of such a confidence, might accuse him of drawing a gloomy picture of public affairs. He begged leave, however, to be understood, that he by no means presented such a view of the times as to depress our national spirit. He meant no melancholy forebodings to check the career of preparation against our common enemy and that of mankind. He only wished to remove the evil of deception from before our eyes, to scout that false confidence under which ministers sheltered themselves—a confidence which, if passed over in silence, may endanger the very existence of the nation, because it avows and cherishes a trick upon itself. Let the hon. baronet, therefore, retire to his pillow, if he please, and wrap himself up in his charm of naval confidence.—It was now necessary for him to explain to the House the extraordinary turn which the present debate had taken. When he came down to the House, he had been requested to commune with one of his Majesty's ministers on the subject of the motions which he was then about to submit to their consideration. After stating the purport of the motions, he received the assurance of those very ministers, that two of the five papers would be allowed. Believing that one of the two papers promised would afford sufficient information on which he could ground an inquiry into the conduct of the Admiralty, he was less anxious to impress upon the minds of the House the tendency and necessity of his motion. Confiding in the assurance of ministers, and knowing their determination to resist the other motions preparatory to his inquiry, he thought it needless to argue on the policy of the measure. But at last, out came the real truth, and the ministers with their friends did not hesitate to refuse the papers, because, say they, “you have not stated any parliamentary ground for the investigation.” This was certainly not acting either with that candour or fair dealing which every member of Parliament had a right to expect from the servants of the crown. They first deprecate or check the strength of the observations intended by the compromise of these two papers, and then have the modesty to say “you have not made out any Parliamentary ground.” What are our preparations, and what is our force? In this information, so essential to our happiness, we cannot be gratified, because it is not

convenient or safe for his Majesty's ministers. Information was wanted to provide against the greatest and most serious evil which this country ever experienced, an evil now awfully impending over us, the consequences of which must be terribly fatal to either or both nations.—Mr. Pitt reproached ministers severely for not availing themselves of the intermediate space between peace and war, when they saw, according to their own confession, the hostile disposition of the French government. Our national spirit had already done wonders in the system of preparation; but ministers had done little or nothing. Ministers, instead of encouraging that spirit, had frequently checked its progress. Their measures had sometimes been so feebly concerted, as to present to the mind of a candid observer nothing but instantaneous destruction, ruin, and disgrace. To aid them in their duty to the public, to discharge his own duty to the nation, he wished for the information now mentioned, but which they resisted without assigning sufficient cause.—The right hon. gent. then drew an ironical picture of the supporters of administration. Glancing at Mr. Tierney, he ridiculed the powerful support which he gave them; but stated, that perhaps it might be unfair yet to form a judgment of his zeal and activity in the cause; for as he had evinced zeal and activity in opposing a former government, he might perhaps still evince zeal and activity in supporting the present government. A conclusion to that effect might certainly be drawn from that part which he had acted that night, although it must be admitted, that he had not attained yet that aptitude for the exercise of his abilities on the side of the Treasury. The new convert to the Treasury, continued Mr. Pitt, says, that Lord St. Vincent is not so much alarmed, so panic-struck, as I am. I should be glad to know if this be the language of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If it be, what has the country to expect from his vigilance and energy? The army, although not so powerful as I could have wished, yet has made the most noble display of patriotism. The new military system, that of the volunteers owes not its origin to the present ministers. It was a favourite system of the last ministers. The present men in power have frequently adopted, but seldom protected, any measure whatever. With all his respect, nay, affection, for the new military system, our naval defence was that on which we should chiefly rest our hopes. Our navy was the grand and proud bulwark of our fame—that navy, which had extend-

ed our commerce, our dominion, and power, to the most remote parts of the world—that navy, which had explored new sources of wealth, which had discovered new objects of glory. Let us, therefore, augment rather than diminish the pride of the nation, and let us not be referred back to dry periods of history when all comparisons are absurd and unavailing. Let us watch with the greatest jealousy and circumspection the rise and progress of the new marine of France, so dangerous to the interest and glory of this country. Let us watch France more actively than in former times, because she has attained new and extraordinary energies. The present exertions are unprecedented in history. We ought to meet them with at least equal, not inferior activity and energies.—After a variety of arguments, Mr. Pitt noticed the conduct of Mr. Sheridan, in substance nearly as follows; among the many assaults which I have had to repel this evening, was one from a very brilliant flash of lightning, a meteor which for some time has moved neither on the one side nor on the other; a meteor whose absence all may with me have regretted; a meteor on whose return having concentrated its force, has fixed its rays of resentment and indignation against me—but in whose blazing face I can look without fear or dread. No insinuations, however bitter or bold, will ever induce me to surrender my freedom in this House. I am fully determined not to renounce my privileges as a member of Parliament. I admire the uncommon valour, I extol the vast renown, the glorious achievements of Lord St. Vincent. To him we are highly indebted for shedding extraordinary lustre on our national glory. I did believe, that when his lordship took upon himself the direction of our naval affairs, the public service would derive great benefit from his patriotic exertions, and professional skill. I did believe that his name, in whatever naval capacity, was a tower of strength;—but I am apt to think, that between his lordship as a commander on the sea, and his lordship as First Lord of the Admiralty, there is a very wide difference. It cannot, surely, be a subject of surprise, that Lord St. Vincent should be less brilliant and less able in a civil capacity than in that of a warlike one. And with all my lofty ideas of his character, as a brave and successful naval commander, I shall not shrink from my duty in censuring him when presiding at the Board of the Admiralty, if he deserve it. I do not deny but that my motion for the production of the papers imply blame on his lordship. I, therefore, candidly avow, that I do not come forward

on this occasion from a tender regard to the character or conduct of his lordship, while at the Board of Admiralty. I claim this right of censure as a member of Parliament, if I can make out good grounds for the inquiry; but without I am allowed the official documents, I cannot prove the validity of my grounds, I cannot follow up my inquiry. If ministers chuse to make this a question of confidence, they cannot, they shall not induce me to the surrender of the inestimable privileges transmitted to every member of Parliament by his predecessors in the House. In bringing forward the subject of this present discussion, I have no other motive than merely to discharge my duty to my country. After Sir William Pulteney had said a few words, the question was loudly called for, when strangers were ordered to withdraw, preparatory to a division; the discussion however, continued some time after the strangers were excluded. At length the House divided, when the numbers were,

For Mr. Pitt's motion . . . 130
Against it 201

Majority, against the motion, 71

List of the Minority.

Adams, W.	Euston, Lord
Allen, J.	Elliott, Right Hon. W.
Adair, R.	Fox, Hon. C. J.
Butler, Hon.	Francis, P.
Buxton, Sir R.	Fitzpatrick, General
Barlow, F. W.	Foljambe, F.
Burdett, Sir F.	Foster, Rt. Hon. J.
Bankes, H.	Ferguson, R.
Bradshaw, R. H.	Fitzhugh, W.
Brooke, Lord	Fitzharris, Lord
Bligh, T.	Folkestone, Lord
Berkeley, Admiral	Falkiner, F. J.
Burroughs, W.	Garland, G.
Bootle, W.	Gower, Lord G. L.
Babbington, T.	Gunning, G. W.
Cooke, B.	Grenville, Rt. Hon. T.
Crevey, T.	Gregor, F.
Courtenay, J.	Greenfell, P.
Canning, Rt. Hon. G.	Graham, J.
Cartwright, W. R.	Henderson, A.
Cowper, hon. S.	Hardiman, F.
Craufurd, Col.	Hippesley, Sir J.
Caulfield, hon. H.	Holland, H.
Chapman Charles	Jolliffe, H.
Codrington, C.	Jeffrey, J.
Daly, Bowes	Kinnaird, Hon. C.
Dundas, hn. C. H.	Kensington, Lord
Dundas, Hon. G.	Lambe, T. Davis
Dundas, Right Hon. W.	Langton, G.
Dickson, Colonel	Leigh, R. Holt
Duncombe, C.	Lovaine, Lord
Dent, J.	Lascelles, Hon. Ed.
Dillon, Hon. A.	Lascelles, Hon. H.
Dupre, J.	Latouche, R.
Dennison, J.	Latouche, J.
Dickenson, W.	Laurence, Dr.
Dickenson, W. jun.	Lawley, Sir R.
Elford, Sir W.	Lennox, General
Ellis, C. R.	Lowther, J.

Lowther, Colonel J.	Sneyd, N.
Madocks, W. A.	Smith, G.
Milner, Sir W. M.	Smith, S.
Mildmay, Sir H.	Smith, J.
Morpeth, Lord	Smith, Joshua
Morland, W.	Sloane, Colonel
North, D.	Scott, Claude
Newport, Sir J.	Scott, S.
Ossulston, Lord	Scott, Jos.
Ord, W.	Thellusson, P. T.
Osborne, J.	Temple, Lord
Ponsonby, G.	Thornton, R.
Petty, Lord H.	Thornton, S.
Peirse, H.	Turner, E.
Ponsonby, Rt. Hn. W.	Villiers, Right Hon. J.
Pitt, Right Hon. W.	Whyte, M.
Proby, Lord	Walpole, Hon. G.
Porchester, Lord	Wilberforce, W.
Portman, E. B.	Willet, J. W.
Porcher, Dupre	Ward, R.
Penn, J.	Ward, Hon. G.
Preston, Sir R.	Windham, Rt. Hon.
Russell, Lord W.	Wynne, C. W. W.
Spencer, Lord R.	Wynne, Sir W. W.
St. John, St. A.	Wrottesley, Sir J.
Saville, G.	Wigram, R.

Bourne Sturges
Long, Right Hon. C. } TELLERS.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, March 16.

Mr. John Clark and Mr. Adam were heard as counsel for the appellant, in the appeal from the Court of Session in Scotland, the hon. Captain Charles Elphinstone Fleming against the Hon. George Abercromby, of Tallybody. The farther consideration was postponed till Monday.—The Irish Malt Duty, Irish Revenue, Irish Comteravailing duty, Irish Hide and Tallow Duty Bills, were brought from the Commons and read a first time.—The bills on the table were forwarded in their respective stages.—Adjourned till Monday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, March 16.

[MINUTES.]—The Scotch Bank Stock Bill was read a second time, and committed to a private Committee.—A new writ was ordered for the election of a representative for the borough of Yarmouth in the county of Southampton, in the room of John Delgarno, who has accepted of the Stewartry of the Chiltern Hundreds.—Mr. Corry brought in a bill for the relief of the families of the Irish militiamen, which was read a first, and ordered to be read a second time on Monday next.—The Exchequer Bills Bill went through a Committee, and the report was ordered to be received on Monday.—Lord William Russell moved for leave to bring in a bill to alter and amend so much

of the act of the 34th of his present Majesty, as relates to the sums to be paid persons who shall compound for statute labour. Leave given.—Mr. Alexander brought up the report of the Committee on the Neutral Ships' Bill which was agreed to, and the bill ordered to be read a third time on Monday.—Mr. Vansittart brought in a bill to continue the act of the 41st of his present Majesty for allowing plantation sugar to be warehoused, which was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time on Monday.—The hon. gent. also introduced a bill for continuing the several regulations with respect to rape-seed, seal-skin, salt, &c., used in the Greenland whale fishery, oil and blubber, &c., as recommended by the resolution of the Expiring Laws' Committee. This bill was read a first, and ordered to be read a second time on Monday. The other orders of the day were disposed of and the House adjourned till Monday.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, March 19.

Counsel were heard in continuation relative to the Scotch Appeal, *Fleming v. Abercrombie*, viz. Mr. Adam as second Counsel for the appellant, and Mr. Alexander as leading Counsel for the respondent: the farther hearing of the case was adjourned till Wednesday.—The various bills before the House were forwarded in their respective stages. Among these, the Irish Revenue Bill, the Irish Malt Duty, the Irish Countervailing Duties, and the Hides and Tallow Importation Bills were severally read a second time. Some private business was then disposed of, after which their lordships adjourned till to-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, March 19.

[MINUTES.]—Mr. Alexander brought up the report of the bill for providing for the pay and cloathing of the militia. The amendments in which were read and agreed to.—The bill for increasing the rate of subsistence to inn keepers and others, on quartering soldiers, was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time.—The Exchequer Bills' Bill was ordered to be read a third time to-morrow, if then engrossed.—The Neutral Ships' Bill was read a third time and passed; as was also the Expiring Laws' Bill.—The Sugar Warehouse Bill was read a second time, and ordered to be committed to a Committee of the whole House

to-morrow.—The Irish Militia Families' Bill was read a second time, and ordered to be committed to a Committee of the whole House on Thursday next, on the motion of Mr. Corry.—Mr. Gregor moved, that there be laid before the House an account of the number of districts from which assessments under the property tax have been returned to the office appropriated to receive the same, stating the total sum assessed. Ordered. Also that there be laid before the House an account of the number of districts from which no such assessments have been returned into the said office. Ordered.

[VOLUNTEER CONSOLIDATION BILL.]—Mr. Secretary *Yorke* moved the order of the day for going into a further consideration of the report of the Volunteer Consolidation Bill. He said, that previous to the House going into a further consideration of this subject, he must beg their attention to a few observations he had to offer in consequence of some misrepresentations which he understood had gone abroad, but which he had not heard of till that day, relative to a clause which was supposed to have been introduced into the bill in a surreptitious manner. The words he alluded to were "the United Kingdoms." In his first opening of the plan for introducing this system, he very well remembered to have stated that the power of the King to call out the volunteers, was intended to be applicable to Great Britain and Ireland. That bill was printed on the 10th of February, and the word which then was placed to convey the sense of the act, was the word "realm," which was fully intended to apply to Great Britain and Ireland since the period of the union. When the bill was committed, he had stated that the clauses which related to the volunteers of Ireland were intended to be withdrawn, as it had been deemed more advisable to substitute a bill entirely for the purpose of regulating the volunteers of that part of the united empire, but that opinion had been rescinded. In order to do away all doubts on the subject, the words "United Kingdoms" were added, and the clause stood now exactly the same as it did then. The bill had since been twice committed, and once recommitted, without any hon. member having found the least fault with the clause. He begged leave to ask, whether, if any invasion was to take place on the coast of Ireland, it would not be advisable that his Majesty should have the power to call out the volunteers here as well as there? But notwithstanding his own opinion was very decided on the point, yet, if it was

thought wrong by the House, he would not on any account press it upon them. He only wished to justify himself from any idea that he would introduce words into any clause which were different in their meaning and operation from what he had explained, or intended them to be when he first introduced the bill, and opened the nature and bearing of the measure. Having made these observations he said he should move, "that the House do now take into farther consideration the said Report."

General Tarleton said, he should not attempt to enter, at any great length, on the present subject, nor to trespass long on the time and patience of the House; but he hoped he should be honoured with their attention to some remarks he had to offer, as, in such an awful crisis as the present, he thought it the peculiar duty of every general officer to deliver his sentiments. It might, perhaps, happen, that, in the particular situation in which he was then placed, some obloquy might be thrown on him. He felt himself, however, superior to such cold considerations, and would prefer what he thought the strict rule of duty, to every thing else, assuring the House that whatever danger might threaten the country, how great soever it might be, and come when it would, he would be as ready to shed the last drop of his blood in its defence, as any man living in it. A right hon. gent. (Mr. Pitt) had said, some short time past, that we were now engaged in a war, which the youngest man in the House might not live to see the end of. Another gent. had said, the volunteers could not be roughly handled. He, for his own part, had, in a very early period of the peace, recommended it to his Majesty's ministers to keep up a very large military force. He had stated in his place, in that House, that we were 15 millions of people, possessed, it was true, of as much spirit, courage, and enterprise as any men on the earth, but composing, generally, a commercial community; that we had been placed, by Providence, directly opposite to a nation consisting of forty-five millions, almost entirely a military people, and headed by most active and ambitious officers. He, therefore, had given it as his opinion, that our military force should be increased and placed upon a most respectable footing. To the present system he was ready to give all due credit, as calculated to repel the sudden invasion or attack; but it became the duty of ministers, when they found the enemy had laid his plan, and taken his measures on the most extensive scale, and had collected one of the largest

armies in the world, to endeavour to meet him with such a force as should be most likely and best calculated to act against him on as equal terms as possible. When he was first appointed to the Severn district, he had endeavoured, as much as was in his power, to make the volunteers acquainted with all those manœuvres and different modes of turning out of their quarters, and meeting at distant places with other corps, as were most calculated to be serviceable to them in case of any sudden appearance of the enemy; but he found them in such a state of insubordination that he could not send a soldier five miles to execute any order of his, because the horses of the yeomanry corps were not found by government. He by no means intended to charge this state of insubordination as a fault of his Majesty's ministers, but he could not avoid stating it as a very momentous and radical defect in the system. In consequence of this refusal to convey his letters, as lieutenant-general of the Severn district, Col. Peach's battalion of 500 fine young men actually marched thirty-five miles, in order to meet some other corps on the West Downs, because he could not get a letter conveyed by a light-horseman to apprise the colonel that the meeting was put off from the unfavourable state of the weather. At the time he thought his letter had gone, he was surprised to find it sent back to him, with information that the officer to whom he had entrusted it, could not get it forwarded. He wrote immediately to the adjutant-general, requesting him to lay the business before government, and in about ten days he received a cold phlegmatic answer, not to give himself any farther trouble in the business, for he had nothing to do with the volunteers. He thought, therefore, it was of little consequence appointing field officers as inspectors of corps, if such kind of proceedings were to be looked over, and allowed to go on.—The general then mentioned a corps, called the Selwood Forest Legion, which had actually refused to obey the orders of the general of division, or the lord-lieutenant, or any orders but those of their own officers. He had lamented this state of insubordination, and implored them to attend to their duty, but all in vain; for they afterwards shewed so mutinous a spirit, that they said they would rather fight it out on the parade, than yield precedence to any other corps, or submit to the orders of the lord-lieutenant, or general of division, and then actually formed themselves into an independent corps. He made a report of this alarming procedure to the War Office, which was not attended to for a month, and then

be received a letter from the secretary of state, desiring that the business might be amicably arranged; so that insubordination, bordering on mutiny, was to be commuted by an amicable arrangement.—The next object in the system, which he disliked, was the exemptions. In the battalion of reserve, which he commanded in his district, there was a deficiency of 699. On inquiry into the cause the answer was, they cannot be obtained on account of the numerous exemptions allowed to the volunteers. In the militia in his district, which now consists of two battalions, they were very short of their complement, and from the same cause. It was the same case, also, with the second Wiltshire Regt., which was commanded by as active, zealous, and enterprising a nobleman as any in the kingdom, the earl of Pembroke, who gave the same reason for not being able to complete it.—He now came, to notice the army itself; and the recruiting parties had not obtained a tenth of what was wanted. In Marlborough there were 28 parties, and they had obtained 19 recruits. In Birmingham there were 11 parties, and but 9 recruits among them all. In short, the whole regular army was at a stand in respect to recruiting, merely owing to the very numerous exemptions which included the whole of the first class of the country. It was time, therefore, that we should rouse from our lethargy. We must not remain supine and idle, as we have been. He would, therefore, humbly propose, that since our engagements are such as nothing but a serious conflict can settle, we ought seriously to think of pouring some life's blood into the army, by filling its ranks with some of the youth and strength of the country. He was sorry to say there was something like compulsion in what he had to offer; but when every thing near and dear to the country; when its first and fairest interests were at stake; it was absolutely necessary to resort to measures which seemed to partake of coercion. He would, therefore, advise, that a revision should take place of all the ballots which had hitherto been made, in order to fill up the army; something like the first class of men, who were intended to be raised under the defence act. He would not suffer a single man to go out of the country, till our defence was fully provided for, or the necessity for it was over. He would not allow a single soldier to be sent on any quixotic expedition abroad, but he would concentrate our whole force at home, and place it on such a footing, as would enable us, in case the enemy landed, to give him such a reception, as he would not easily get over.

Although, he said, the country might sustain a shock, he would wish us to live like Englishmen, and like Englishmen to die. He did not find himself at all bigotted to his plan, but had merely thrown it out for the consideration of the House. He owned he was not favourable to the volunteer system; but if it should be the opinion of the House, that it was proper to continue it, he would wish to see it put on an efficient footing. Whatever might be their determination, he assured the House he should always be ready to shed the last drop of his blood in the service and defence of the country.

Mr. *Cartwright* said, he was one of those who thought very favourably of the volunteers, as he was satisfied we could not raise so great a force in any other way. He alluded to one point in the bill to which he felt a very strong objection; he meant "that which prevents any member from retiring from a corps, that had agreed to serve during the war." As the words now stand, no member can retire. This he conceived to be a breach of faith, and ought not to be countenanced. You first tell the men when they enter that they have a right to resign; then comes the attorney-general with an opinion, that they have no such right: then comes the judgment of the Court of King's Bench, that they have the right; afterwards this act avows distinctly that right; and now comes this provision which clogs and binds up the will and right of the individual in the offer of a majority to serve during the war. It is neither more nor less than a downright breach of faith; and if the clause was not altered, he would vote against the bill altogether.

Mr. *Erskine* said, he was delivered from a great deal of anxiety, by the declaration of the right hon. gent. opposite to him, upon the extension of the bill.—He hoped also, that the right hon. gent. would upon reflection, feel the propriety of altering the clause to which the hon. gent. who spoke last, had objected. He meant the clause, which prevented all volunteers from resigning, who had already agreed to continue their services during the war. This clause, he apprehended, the House could not persist in, consistently with the judgment of the Court of King's Bench, and the declarations of ministers subsequent to that decision, stating, that if that had not been declared to be the law, they intended to propose that it should become the law. Now, what was the ground of the decision of the Court of King's Bench upon the question, whether a volunteer had power to resign? It was not founded on the construction but the nature of the

service. If a man come out under arms upon the occasion of an invasion, what was the duration of his engagement! The duration of that engagement was, as long as the enemy continues in the country, whose entrance into it created that service; but that continuance was not necessarily and at all events the same as the duration of the war. Since the judgment of the Court of King's Bench had been given, some volunteer corps had come forward and offered their services during the war; he thought the clause as it now stood, was too general with regard to such corps. He thought, that this bill ought not to tie any volunteers down to any thing that they had hitherto done, but that, before their services should be declared permanent, and that they should not be at liberty to retire from the service, they should be all asked by their commanding officer, "Will you now, knowing as you do, that you are at liberty to retire if you think fit, wave that right, and agree to serve during this war?" If afterwards they assented to this proposition, it might be binding on them; but he would not approve of fastening this permanency of service upon them for any thing they had already done, because that would be imposing terms upon some volunteers which could not affect others. If any one general system of enactment was proposed, by which all his Majesty's subjects were to be affected alike, the volunteers would have no reason to complain, nor would they complain he was confident; but they should not be selected as persons on whom any terms should be fastened different from any other class of his Majesty's subjects.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* considered that many of the observations already made were premature, as none of the amendments suggested could be made in the present stage of the debate. As to the point of good faith with the volunteers, government had always made it their ruling principle, in every transaction relative to them; and he should never, for a moment, think of departing from the most scrupulous good faith and attention to that excellent body of men.—He, therefore, thought, that rather than admit even of a doubt on the subject, he would leave the matter as it stood before, and leave out the proviso altogether. But in what related to masters and servants, he could not agree with the learned gent. He thought that the right of the state to command the services of all, ought not to be impaired by any connexion arising merely between masters and servants.

Mr. *Whitbread* thought that, many alterations were still necessary in this bill, for

which he wished that it should be again committed. Unless these alterations were made, he should feel himself under an obligation to oppose the bill altogether. He contended, that there were certainly no exemptions intended to be given originally, and none were expected; and he was of opinion, that the measure would be far better, now, if the exemptions were taken away altogether, leaving to the volunteers the full right of resignation, if they found the burden too heavy. He then took notice of that clause which allowed the commanding officer to grant leave of absence to the volunteers. A volunteer, he observed, might be absent for very good reasons, so long that it would be impossible for him, in the course of the year, to make out the number of days required by the act for his exemptions. He also might be confined by sickness in such a manner that he should never be able to come out, even once in the year. Yet in both these cases no provision was made in the bill for the exemption of such persons, which, if exemptions were to be granted at all, was a very great injustice. He observed, in the bill, that a commanding officer was subjected to a penalty if he made a false return, and yet he was subjected to no penalty, for making no return at all, and the volunteers, therefore, by his neglect, might, in some instances, be deprived of their claim to exemption.—With respect to the power granted to the commanding officers of dismissing members from their corps, he wished to know whether it was intended that he should have this power, notwithstanding any rules to the contrary, in the corps, which had not undergone an examination by his Majesty?—Another thing which he thought unjust, was the power given to the commanding officer of disallowing to any member of his corps, one of his days of drill, upon his supposing that he had not behaved properly. A fault of a very trifling nature, therefore, might be of serious consequence to the volunteer, by depriving him of his exemption. He also thought that point extremely objectionable which went to allow the commanding officer to keep a volunteer in a state of arrest during the time of the drill. This, as it appeared to him, would be either ridiculous or dangerous, by exciting a spirit of resentment in the corps. He also was of opinion, that the control of masters over their servants and apprentices, ought not to be removed in any respect, as it might be productive of a great deal of inconvenience. The servants and apprentices thinking it good fun, perhaps, to go a volunteering, might insist upon going at the very time when it would be most inconvenient

for their masters. All this was totally unnecessary, as there was abundance of volunteers without the necessity of removing this control. He observed that the point relating to the payment of fines was worse than before; for now there was no imprisonment at all, but merely a double fine and a distress after seven days' notice, which, in the case of many volunteers, would be nothing else than telling them to run away. He thought the bill very imperfect. He disapproved of the system entirely, but now he wished it, such as it was, to be brought to the greatest perfection possible.

Mr. Secretary *Yorke* thought it somewhat strange to say, that after all the consideration given to this bill by the House, the system was in a worse situation than before. There was certainly no material alteration here of the principle of the system, but at the same time, this bill certainly went to make it more perfect than before. He observed, that the exemptions could not with propriety be taken away from the volunteers now, after they had been recognised by Parliament. In cases of sickness, volunteers might be allowed to be absent altogether, without being deprived of their exemptions. The circumstance, that none could claim exemption, except a return was made, would be a security for the commanding officer making a return to government. Corps would be allowed to keep to their own regulations about dismissals, unless they had been abrogated. As to the disallowing a man a day on account of his bad behaviour, it ought to be recollected that the return was to be made on the spot by the commanding officer, who would have sufficient time to consider of it. In reply to the objections of Gen. Tarleton, he observed, that the yeomanry and volunteers were not under the command of the generals of the districts, until called out on actual service, and, therefore, though one of the volunteer cavalry had refused to go upon a message for him, there was no way by which he could be compelled to do so at present. With regard to the amendment, about which so much had been said, he had certainly understood that the volunteers were liable to be called out, in order to take the place of the disposable force, in case of an invasion of Ireland; but he would not press that matter, but rely on the energy of the volunteers.

Mr. T. Grenville said, that he had heard the right hon. gent. opposite to him, in opening the business now before the House, speak of a re-commitment of the bill, but he had since heard no assurance of that kind from any of the ministers. He wished to

know in what state of the bill the present discussion took place?

The *Speaker* said, that the question before the House was, that the Report of the Committee be now taken into further consideration. Two things, therefore, were at the option of the House, either to agree to the Report, or order the bill to be re-committed; or, instead of now, to appoint it to be taken into consideration on some future day.

Mr. *Kinnaird* thought that he should best perform his duty by opposing the receiving of the Report. He viewed the present bill as an inefficient substitute for a crude and undigested system of defence. In all the deliberations on the present bill, the volunteers, he trusted, had been considered as divided into two classes; those who entered in June, and those who had not stepped forward till August. To those of the latter description he begged himself to be understood as applying his observations. During the last session, Parliament had under its consideration the defence act, which, under all its disadvantages, he had no hesitation in thinking infinitely superior to that now adopted in its stead. Under that act, the great body on whom the defence of the country must rest, would soon have been in a condition, at a small expense, to act in concert with the regular army. They were to have been trained by officers of the line, and were to have been subject to the same number of drill-days as the force now resorted to. He begged it therefore to be considered, what must have been the difference in strength between such a force and one trained under the present system. They were, under the defence act, to have formed a systematic and regular body; by the present act, they were divided into disjointed and unequally disciplined corps.

Sir *W. Young* repeated what he had observed upon former occasions, with respect to the distinction which he conceived ought to be made between those volunteers who had come forward previous to the defence act, and those who had been subsequently inrolled. He contended, that the present bill was a bill of distrust, with respect to the volunteers, as it went to inflict penalties, arrest, and imprisonment upon those who had patriotically and zealously come forward in defence of their country.

The *Secretary at War* denied that the bill was a bill of distrust with respect to the volunteers. As to the arrest and imprisonment mentioned by the hon. baronet, the latter was not mentioned in the bill, and the former was only introduced to preserve that

discipline which was so necessary in volunteer corps, and was at the same time only to continue whilst the corps were under arms. As to the distinction taken by the hon. bart. between two classes of volunteers, nobody denied that there was a distinction between the volunteers who had offered their services at different periods; but, to make that distinction in the exemptions, would be highly invidious. As to the objection urged respecting the drill-serjeants for volunteer corps, the fact was, that the expense was merely transferred from the respective parishes to government. With respect to what had been stated by the hon. general, as to no orderly dragoon to be found at Bristol, because no one of the volunteer cavalry would become an orderly dragoon to carry a message, he should only observe, that the hon. gent. had no authority to require it, and that it was not exactly the use to be made of volunteer cavalry.

Mr. *Alexander* considered the objections that were made against this bill, and against the volunteer system, to be so trifling, compared to the evils to be guarded against, he thought it would be madness to throw such obstacles in its way, as should defeat it altogether. In the volunteers he was convinced we had every advantage we could desire; they constituted a power, that would, in his opinion, be sufficient to meet the armies of France any where. The kingdom never had a land force equal to that of France since the Treaty of Westphalia to the present time. But now all the strength, and all the military elements of the nation were collected, and consolidated in a manner that never before was known; we never before had such a force. Britain was now an armed nation; and the people trained to the use of arms might be put into any shape the government should think proper. But he must ask, what would be the effect of a levy en masse? He had himself an opportunity of witnessing what a levy en masse, or an armed peasantry were capable of doing. The rebel peasantry of Ireland came forward like a levy en masse, but they were always defeated by a comparatively small body of yeomanry. The difference between England and France at present was, that here we had an immense voluntary force, which cost the kingdom little, and which would be fully adequate to all the purposes of defence. But in France they were obliged to keep up great standing armies at an immense expense. These armies were necessary to keep the people of France and the conquered countries in subjection. Whenever the French were to meet us, the

present land-war would, on our part, be carried on at a less expense than any war we were ever engaged in with them. If the country was to save itself against such an enemy, that could only be done by keeping up our present volunteer force; and the expense attending the establishment was but a trifling insurance for the vast benefits we should gain by it.—The motion for taking the report of the bill into further consideration was then put and carried.

Mr. *Fox* said, he wished, for several reasons, which, in the course of that night's debate, he should state to the House, that the bill be recommitted. He would leave it to some other member to make a motion to that effect.

Mr. *Secretary Yorke* moved that the amendments in the bill be now read a second time. This motion was then put by the Speaker, who said it was the question then before the House.

Mr. *C. Wynne* said, he rose to oppose the second reading of the amendments, in order afterwards to move, that the bill be recommitted. The bill originally pretended to nothing more than to declare the right of resigning in volunteers, agreeable to the judgment of the Court of King's Bench. It now embraced a vast variety of regulations, many of which were of the most dangerous tendency, scarcely any salutary, and almost all equivocally expressed. The bill had done nothing towards forming that complete system for the volunteers which had been acknowledged to be necessary.

Mr. *Fox* said, that in opposing the motion for the second reading of the bill, he wished distinctly to be understood, that he did not wish to throw out the bill; he merely wished to have it recommitted, in order that it might be amended. His principal reason for wishing it to be recommitted was, what might induce some gentlemen to oppose it altogether; viz., that if it is passed in its present form, it would make the ministers, and, what was worse, the legislature, appear contemptible in the eyes of this country, and of foreign countries. The volunteer system, whether it was good or whether it was bad, was admitted, on all hands to form a considerable part of the defence of the country; and it was admitted, even by ministers, that the system was one which required revision and alteration. Parliament met on the 18th of November; they had now reached the 19th of March, and the only measures that ministers had taken for the defence of the country, was the bill before the House.—We know that the enemy have made preparations for the invasion of this country,

gigantic beyond all former precedent; we were told by the secretary of state, that those menaces were immediately to be carried into execution: we know, that upon the issue of this contest, depends every thing that can be dear to men; and yet, after a session of above four months, the only measure of defence that ministers have brought forward is this bill. Gracious God, Sir, what is there in this bill? No steps have been taken to recruit the army, no means have been taken to improve or complete the army of reserve; all, all has rested upon the volunteers; and this is the bill which ministers have proposed for the completion of the volunteer system. Let any man, the most blindly attached to this bill, be asked, what is its chief merit? and he will say it is that it does that which it was at first professed that it would do, viz. nothing. Mr. Fox said, he liked the volunteer system, because, he knew the spirit, the zeal, and the courage of the men who composed that body; no man could deny that the volunteers would be highly useful in the defence of the country, on account of their readiness, their spirit, and their numbers; but did this bill assist them in any of those points? Certainly, not. After the time which ministers had taken to prepare the bill, it was natural to suppose that at least they would have considered the regulations they mean to propose; but was that the case? It now appeared, that in case of any attempt upon Ireland, and that an insurrection in that country should unfortunately be the result, all the volunteers of this country might be called out, and placed under martial law, and must continue soldiers to all intents and purposes while that insurrection lasted; was such a thing ever in the contemplation of the volunteers? But it now seemed that it was to be given up, and certainly better late than never; but this was the system ministers had always pursued with the volunteers; they had done everything to damp, to check, to harass them; as soon as they were beat from one trench by the volunteers, they took post behind another; and so they were beat out of trench after trench, and still they seemed determined to die as it were in the last ditch. This was the case with regard to the power of resignation; upon this subject the chancellor of the exchequer had, as usual, no opinion; however, he asked the attorney general, who it appeared had a wrong opinion; it was however circulated through the country by the ministers, who professed that they had at the same time an intention of bringing in a bill to give the volunteers a power of resignation, and they wisely wait-

ed till the decision of the Court of King's Bench had rendered such a bill unnecessary. First of all it was intended that the volunteers might resign, then the attorney general was of opinion that they could not resign, then the Court of King's Bench determined that they could resign, then the ministers bring in a bill professing to give them the power to resign, and then they insert a provision in this bill which in many cases will render it impossible for them to resign, and he had no doubt it would end in their giving up the proviso and saying they had a power to resign. He preferred going into the committee again, because there were many other objectionable clauses, one of them was the clause which took away the exemptions if a man did not attend a certain number of days; but it professed to restore the man to his exemption if he afterwards attended his full number of days; but how was this possible if the corps had been out their full number of days? Was the corps to be called out 8 or 10 days more, to give this man an opportunity of making up his regular number of days? that could not be intended; then it was mere deception to tell a man that it was in his power to recover his exemption. The clause which relates to contracts between masters and servants was equally liable to objection, because it would be a very serious thing in the country to take a servant away from a farmer for 40 days; but that which related to apprentices was still worse. It was an undoubted point that the labour of the apprentice belonged to the master, but this bill took away the apprentice from his master for 40 days. But it would be said, that a compensation was given, and to whom was it given? to the master, who had a right to the labour; no, to the apprentice, who was seduced and paid for neglecting his master's labour. Another objection which had been taken by an honourable friend of his, and which had not been answered was, that which rendered the men of any corps liable to all fines and subscriptions agreed to by the majority. There were a great many other objections, but it was unnecessary to repeat them; he had stated enough to shew the necessity of recommitting this bill. What situation would they stand in if this bill were to pass in its present form? It would be this: that Parliament had now sat above 4 months, at a time when this country was threatened with the most formidable invasion that ever any country was threatened with, and that the only measure they had taken for the public defence was, that the volunteers should be exercised 20 days in the year more than before, for this was in fact the only essential

clause in the bill. What would the people think? Would they not suppose, that the story of invasion was only invented to put them on their guard, and that Parliament did not seriously believe it; for they could never suppose, that Parliament would have thrown away so much time about this bill, if they really expected an invasion, without taking one step to recruit the army or to improve the army of reserve. The volunteers might be like a regular force, in bravery he was sure they would, but then the country would have nothing else, they would have no levy en masse to support them. Every strong arm, every willing heart in the country, that was not in a volunteer corps, would be completely useless in the hour of danger, and they would be in the situation described by a right hon. gent. exclaiming, when the enemy landed, "I am desirous to serve my country, but I know not what to do!" The volunteers were certainly in a different situation, but he believed three-fourths of them had never fired with ball. He also understood, that in many counties they had not received above 14 or 15 rounds of ammunition; and he instanced the county of Wilts in particular. He was one of those who did not think the danger as great as others; but it certainly was an awful crisis, and he only begged the House to compare the danger with which we were threatened, with this bill, which was all that ministers had prepared to meet it.—The poet had well said, on another subject, "he trembled, when he compared the punishment with the crime,"—meaning how little the one was proportioned to the other. He would say also, that he trembled, when he compared our danger with our means of defence. It was impossible to make that comparison, and not to tremble. But, said Mr. Fox, I tremble less, because I do rely upon the volunteers, because I do believe that not the constant bickerings which ministers have had with them, not their fighting with them point after point, and being beat out of trench after trench, not all the contention and litigation which ministers have had with them, not all the damps and checks which have been thrown upon them, not the refusing their zealous offers of service, not the neglect in furnishing them with ammunition; I do not tremble so much, I say, because I do believe that even all these things cannot destroy the spirit of the country, which will, I am sure, not only rise superior to every effort of the enemy, but I am even sanguine enough to believe (and I cannot reach a higher climax) that it will rise superior to the weakness, the incapacity,

and the imbecility of the present ministers.

The *Attorney General* adverted to the repeated and very diffuse discussions which had taken place upon the subject; the bill had been twice re-committed, and what gentlemen may have further to propose could, he thought, be very well considered in the present stage of the bill. The hon. gent. (Mr. Fox) had laid much stress upon the supposed delays which had taken place, and the proposition, he so warmly recommended, must induce still further delays. There were one or two slight alterations to be made, which he thought would remove a solid objection which had been advanced, and that evidently could be done in the present stage of the bill.

Dr. *Laurence* supported the motion for the recommitment. His principal reason for this was, that a number of the clauses now in this bill were introduced on a day (Saturday) when there was a very thin attendance of members. The bill was now seen for the first time as a whole, since it had last passed the committee, and it appeared to him highly proper that it should be now recommitment, to give an opportunity for full and fair discussion of this very interesting subject. The hon. and learned member expressed his decided disapprobation of the clauses as they now stand in the bill, with respect to the right of dismissal, and the compensation to be given to servants and apprentices. Ministers, in his opinion, had done nothing to improve the volunteer system. It was merely a republication of the volunteer system laid down by the late ministers.

Sir *J. Wrottesley* was for the recommitment. He intimated a wish to move for the introduction of a clause into the bill, for the better regulation of the clause as to the number of days allotted to drill in corps to the country. He adverted to the number of volunteers in the metropolis and its vicinity; their numbers, he understood, were nearly 32,000, but out of the number, if he was rightly informed, nearly one-half had engaged only to extend their services to the vicinity of the capital, even in case of invasion. It was his object that a clause should be introduced, taking the exemptions from those whose services were thus limited.

Mr. *Alderman Combe* spoke warmly in praise of the spirit and patriotism of the civic volunteers, and adverted to the circumstance that they were not liable to compulsory service, in the like manner that the inhabitants of the kingdom in general were.

Mr. *Pitt* owned that the bill, as it at present stood, did not by any means come up to the fair expectations which the House and the public entertained on the subject: and that the hope which he had formed had been materially disappointed. The only point which had been gained by the bill was the clause by which encouragement was held out to individuals to enter on permanent pay, and contemplating a danger the approach of which might be apprehended to be at hand, this was certainly an advantageous arrangement. He was afraid, however, that even this improvement was not carried so far as its vast utility and importance required. There was one other clause, which, quite simple in its construction, he likewise viewed to be highly important; he meant to allude to the clause allowing commanding officers the power of arrest, in cases of misbehaviour at muster and drill. Having said this, he had to repeat that the Bill came very far short of what he conceived adequate to the circumstances of the country; anxious, however, as he was for the perfection of the volunteer system, he did not think that any important object would be gained by the recommitment of the bill. It occurred to him, that any amendments so be introduced might be received on the consideration of the report, and therefore, he felt it his duty to oppose the motion.

Mr. *Sheridan* was of opinion, that whatever idea was entertained of the military system of the country, this was not the moment for such a discussion. If gentlemen thought this a matter fit for inquiry, they might move for a Committee on the subject, and the discussion might regularly take place. At present the question was merely whether certain amendments, the propriety of which was not denied, should be introduced on the report or in a new committee for that specific purpose. For some time past, he had, consistently with a principle which three years ago he had stated in that House, felt it his duty to absent himself from his attendance in Parliament, and he had consequently not been present at the different discussions which had taken place in the previous stages of the bill. This, however, he knew, that the bill had already been in 3 Committees and the question came to be, if it should go to a fourth Committee to receive new amendments and improvements? If the bill, as a whole, had not been before the Committee, this would be the strongest argument which he had heard for the recommitment. If a right hon. gent. opposite (Mr. *Pitt*) would rise and state

that he had new clauses to propose in the Committee, or if any other hon. gent. would make a similar declaration, he should certainly vote for the recommitment. Independent of such a declaration, he really had heard no ground laid against proceeding to the consideration of the report. He was the more inclined to this opinion from seeing the candid desire of his Majesty's ministers to make every fair concession.

Mr. *Pitt* in explanation, stated, that he had been misunderstood by the hon. member. He seemed to conceive that he was for the recommitment of the bill, whereas he was against it. Whatever the principle of the hon. gentleman's absence was, if he had been in his place he would have seen that the clauses which he wished to introduce, were not now wanting from any deficiency on his part in proposing them, but from his inability to persuade the House to adopt them.

Mr. *Windham* rose, he said, but to trespass on the attention of the House for a few moments, although before he came down to his place this day he meant to enter much at length into the merits and tendency of the volunteer system, and particularly to reprobate two clauses which had found their way into the bill under consideration, and which excited his astonishment in common with that of every man who valued good faith and justice towards the volunteers. Those clauses, however, having been abandoned by the framers of the bill, and the discussion having taken a turn extremely singular in this stage of the proceeding—a discussion which would more properly belong to a Committee, he felt that he could not enter upon the consideration of the general measure without great disadvantages. He therefore, waved, for the present the full delivery of his opinions upon the subject, the more particularly as he could not but observe that the attention of the House was nearly exhausted. He, however, could not forbear to say, that he conceived it quite, impossible to investigate the merits of the volunteer system, which comprehended above three-fourths of the public force without also taking a view of the other means of our defence, to ascertain how far those means were correspondent to each other and calculated to act efficaciously together. This was a question, in his judgment, of infinite importance, and demanding the most attentive inquiry, inasmuch as it was the commencement of a system, the effects of which would grow on us every day; for the more we advanced in such a situation, the more difficult it would be to change; and, therefore, the

farther we proceeded the stronger would the argument become which was relied upon so much this night, namely, that we had gone too far to recede. For this reason, it was his anxious desire, that we should stop as soon as possible, the progress of a system so defective, so radically inefficient. When arguing against this system, he wished to correct an error that seemed to prevail in the minds of some gentlemen, that he and others who joined with him, meant that the volunteers should be disbanded. Nothing could be more erroneous than this idea, for, on the contrary, the principal objections which he and the gentlemen with whom he acted had to this measure, and which he hoped would not be considered inconsistent were these, that it would produce the dissolution of the greater part of the volunteers, while it would go to render the volunteer system permanent.—With respect to the motion immediately before the House, he would admit the justice of the remark, that new clauses might be proposed and adopted, without recommitting the bill, but yet he was for going into the Committee, and for this plain reason, that a Committee was the natural and proper place to discuss such clauses. An hon. gent. (Mr. Sheridan) had urged that it was unnecessary to go into the Committee, as ministers had manifested such candour, as left no room to doubt of their readiness to accede to any necessary amendment that might be proposed in this stage of the bill. The hon. gent. however, had probably experienced such candour in his Majesty's ministers, in return for the candour which he had shown towards them for some time back, as justified, in his mind the compliments he appeared so strongly disposed to pay them. Reverting to the motion before the House, Mr. W. stated, that in order that the imperfections of the measure might as far as possible be diminished, he would vote for the recommitment.

Mr. *Bastard* maintained that the volunteer system did not militate so much as its adversaries asserted against the progress of the ballot for the militia. As a proof of this, he stated, that in the militia of the county to which he belonged, where volunteer corps were very numerous, the regiment of militia was not only complete, but had many supernumeraries, although not more than ten guineas bounty had ever been given; and he was confident, that if any men were wanting for that body, they could be had from among the volunteers themselves, whose spirits, zeal and military habit,

naturally disposed them to enter, if necessary, into regular military service.

Mr. *T. Grenville* thought it necessary to say a few words to explain the motives on which he should give his vote, and to exculpate his conduct from the charge of any inconsistency that might be made against it. When, on a former period of the sessions he moved for some papers he was induced thereto by his earnest desire to demonstrate to the House, how inadequate the plan of his Majesty's ministers, was, and how impossible it ever was to render their system permanent; and when he gave his consent for going into a Committee, it was in the expectation that something would be struck out that would place the defence of the country upon something like a broad, general, and practicable principle. He never supposed that desirable object could be effected by the present measure, and he was convinced, the more the House considered and turned the subject, the more they would be convinced of the inefficiency, he might say, the absolute nullity, of the bill before them. For what had been the conduct of the right hon. the Sec. of State? Much of the time of the House had been occupied in hearing him make his recantations and renunciations of clauses which he had before offered, as the result of much deliberation and communication with persons who were competently informed respecting them among which was the identical clause, which if it had passed, according to the right hon. gent's admission, would have been the extremity of injustice, to at least 3-4ths of the volunteers. There were also 4 or 5 other clauses, which he acknowledged required alteration. With such glaring defects in the bill, he put it to the candour of gentlemen in the least acquainted with the form and practice of that House, whether a Committee was not the only place in which such defects could be properly corrected, and any important amendments proposed.

Mr. *Sheridan* stated, that if any gent. had a clause to propose which could not be introduced into the Bill without going into a Committee, he would vote for the motion, but not otherwise.

Colonel *Calcraft* said, that if the House would go into the Committee, he should there feel it his duty to propose a clause respecting the grant of additional pay to the volunteers, and also a further allowance for clothing.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* observed that the recommitment of the bill was not necessary in order to enable the hon. gent. to

propose the clause he alluded to, as he might bring it forward in the present stage, and it might afterwards, if adopted, be referred to the consideration of a Committee of Supply. —The House then proceeded to divide, when there appeared.

For recommitting the bill	56
Against it	173

Majority . . . 117

List of the Minority.

Adair, Robert	Hamilton, Lord A.
Bouverie, E.	Kensington, Lord
Barlow, R.	Kinnaird, Hon. Charles
Burdett, Sir Francis	Laurence, Dr.
Bagenel, Walter	Lee, Antoine
Barclay, Sir R.	Morpeth, Lord
Craufurd, Colonel	M'Mahon, F.
Caulfield, hon. H.	Madocks, William
Cavendish, rt. H. Ld. G. H.	Milner, Sir William
Courtenay, John	Moore, G.
Coke, T. W.	Moore, G. P.
Cooke, Brian	North, Dudley
Combe, hon. C.	Ossulston, Lord
Cartwright, W. R.	Ord, William
Calcraft, John	Petty, Lord H.
Creevey, T.	Ponsonby, Rt. Hon. W.
Dillon, Hon. A.	Ponsonby, George
Dundas, Hon. C. L.	Russell, Lord William
Daly, D. B.	Spencer, Lord Robert
Dent, John	St. John, Hon. St. Andr.
Ellis, Ch. Rose	Scudamore, John
Elliot, Wm.	Temple, Lord
Fox, Hon. Chas. Jas.	Wrottesley, Sir John
Fitzpatrick, Hon. R.	Wynne, Sir W. W.
Folkestone, Lord	Wynne, Charles, W. W.
Fellowes, R.	Windham, Rt. Hon. W.
Francis, Philip	Walpole Hon. George
Grenville, Rt. Hon. Th.	Young, Sir W.

When strangers were admitted, the House was occupied in receiving the different amendments.

Sir J. Wrottesley moved an amendment, "that all volunteers, whose services had been accepted subsequent to the 22d. June, 1803, should not be entitled to the customary exemptions, unless they bound themselves to extend their services, in case of invasion, to any part of Great Britain."

Mr. Secretary Yorke opposed this amendment, as being in substance the same which had been rejected at another period of the bill. There were local and particular circumstances which rendered it inadvisable, that corps should on all occasions volunteer for general service.

Mr. Pitt supported the amendment, on the principle that it would be extremely desirable that the House and the country should know with certainty what description and extent of service they were to depend upon in case of invasion.—After several other observations from different hon. members, the question was put, and there were

For the amendment	37
Against it	79

The report was ordered to be brought up again to-morrow.—Mr. Pitt said, that as he understood that it was the intention of some of his Majesty's ministers to bring forward a measure that would have a similar tendency, he would, with leave of the House, agree to wait for any reasonable length of time, in order to see how far their measure would go.—The other orders of the day were then disposed of, and the House adjourned at half-past two.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday March 20.

Mr. Erskine was heard, and evidence received in behalf of Lady H. Fitzgerald's claim to the Ross Peerage. The further hearing adjourned to Thursday next.—The Irish Revenue, the Irish Malt Duties, and Hides and Tallow Importation Bills, went through a Committee of the whole House, and the report was ordered to be received to-morrow.—Several Bills were received from the Commons, and read the first time. Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, March 20.

[MINUTES.]—Sir John Frederick obtained leave to bring in a bill for paving, lighting, and cleansing the parish of Lambeth in the county of Surry.—The Two Millions Exchequer Bills Bill was read a third time and passed.—Sir Jacob Astley, moved that there be laid before the House an account of the malt imported into Gt. Britain from Ireland, and into Ireland from Gt. Britain, during the 6 years, ending 5th of Jan. 1804; distinguishing the duties upon each for each year, as well as the separate duties appertaining to Scotland; also, that there be laid before the House an account of the quantity of malt carried coastways between England and Scotland; also, an account of the quantity of beer imported into Gt. Britain from Ireland, and vice versa; also, an account of the quantity of malt, on which a duty was charged in Gt. Britain, and in Ireland, during the same period. These several motions were agreed to.—Mr. King moved, that there be laid before the House a list of all public accountants, in respect of whom any process had been suspended, prevented, or controlled, under the authority of the act of the 29th of the King. Ordered.—A person from the Exchequer presented at the bar the accounts relative to the surplus of the Consolidated Fund, moved for on the preceding

day by Mr. Gregor. They were laid on the table and ordered to be printed.—The Highway Statute Labour Bill was read a second time, and ordered to be committed only pro forma, and deferred till after the Easter recess.

[PROPERTY TAX.]—Earl Temple observed, that he had on a former day given notice of his intention to bring forward a motion relative to the assessments which had been made on the military incomes of subaltern officers. But since he had given notice, several other cases of a similar kind had presented themselves, which he conceived to be equally strong and equally deserving the attention of Parliament, with that of subaltern officers. He should therefore conceive, he had acted wrong, if he did not bring all the other cases under the consideration of the House. He now, therefore, withdrew the first notice he had given, and gave notice, that shortly after the recess, he would bring forward his motion in a more enlarged and extended shape. His motion should be for a Committee of the whole House to consider the propriety of revising and amending the act for laying a duty on property.

[VOLUNTEER CONSOLIDATION BILL.]—Mr. Secretary Yorke moved, that the report of the volunteer consolidation bill be taken into further consideration.—The report was accordingly taken into consideration, and the clerk proceeded to read over the several amendments and clauses, adopted in the Committee, in order to be agreed to by the House.—On the clause respecting the allowances to volunteers on being called out.

Mr. Pitt said, that as the clause stood, the guinea to which each volunteer would be entitled who came out on permanent pay and duty, was to be placed in the hands of the commanding officer to lay out the whole or part, as he should think fit, for necessities for the use of such volunteer. Now, when he first took the liberty of suggesting to the House the propriety of improving as rapidly as possible, the discipline of the volunteers, he conceived, that the idea of the House was to hold out to each volunteer distinctly a bounty for so doing. It was agreed, that many must make great sacrifices in coming out upon permanent duty, and he did understand, that the principle of giving a bounty to each individual was acceded to. But he could not help thinking, that the bounty being disposed of as provided in the bill, it must operate as an impediment to any encouragement to the volunteers to come out, as the sum to be given would no longer be at the disposal of the individual, nor would he be enabled to provide for his fa-

mily out of it during his absence. The money was thus prevented from becoming what it ought to be, a substitute for his earnings during his absence.

Mr. Secretary Yorke contended, that the guinea ought not to go indiscriminately into the pockets of the volunteers, as, though there might be several industrious men with families, who might wish to appropriate the money to the use of those families, yet there were others who might probably lay it out in procuring those indulgencies which were not very consistent with the character of a soldier.

Mr. Kinnaird denied that this guinea was an inducement to the volunteers to come out, at least in Scotland, because, in fact, they were not paid. He wished to know, whether this guinea was to be paid to them, and if it was, whether it was in the discretion of the commanding officer to lay it out for the men in the purchase of necessities for them, and he also wished to know, whether that guinea was to be considered as a part of the two guineas which the volunteers were to receive when called out in case of invasion.

Mr. Sturges Bourne contended, that the guineas allowed ought to be paid directly to the volunteers, as an inducement to them to offer their services for permanent duty. They came out last year because they were told of invasion, but they would not come out upon the same grounds now when they were told, as they had been in Parliament, that all apprehensions upon that subject was a mere panic, and that the fleet at Boulogne was a Musquito fleet. This guinea ought, therefore, to be given to the men, and even that would be but a small compensation for the loss of time they would sustain in being absent from their labour for 3 weeks.

Mr. Pitt said, if he had understood the instruction sent round by the Sec. of State, according to the construction now put upon it, he certainly would not have troubled the House about it, but certainly that was not the way in which it was generally understood. He was perfectly satisfied with the explanation he had heard, and should act accordingly; but he submitted, whether it might not be proper that some means should be taken of informing others who might have understood the instructions as he had done, and who had not the advantage of hearing the explanation which had been given.

Mr. Hiley Addington said, that the most advantageous way of laying out this money, would be to purchase great coats, which were in point of fact absolutely necessary. With respect to the price of them, he knew that so far from their costing 23 or 24s. that very good ones might be had for 13s.

Mr. Canning said, that the guinea which was to be allowed to the volunteers who offered their services for permanent duty, had been very improperly, in his opinion, compared with the marching guinea allowed to the regulars and to the militia. With regard to the latter, when they were ordered to march, it was not optional in them to march or not, they were bound to do it; but the case was very different with regard to the volunteers. You could not compel the volunteers to offer their services for permanent duty, and, therefore, the guinea was given to them as an inducement to them to go out.

General Grosvenor said, he never was an advocate for this guinea at all; it was one out of two guineas to be allowed in all to the volunteer, and he should vote for its being laid out as proposed by the original clause, and not by that which was proposed by the amendment.

Mr. Fonblanque thought the commanding officer had full power by the clause to provide the volunteer with what was necessary, but then what was necessary was in a great measure a question of taste. A great coat might appear necessary to one man, while another might prefer a feather. The question here was a question of inducement, what was most likely to call a man into the field before the enemy comes.

For the amendment - - - 39

For the original clause without it 73

The amendments being gone through, the bill was ordered to be read a third time on Thursday.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, March 21.

Mr. Alexander was heard on the part of the Respondents in the Appeal Cause the Hon. C. Elphinstone Fleeming v. Hon. G. Montgomery. To be further proceeded in on Friday.—The Irish Malt Duty Bill, the Irish Countervailing Duties Bill, and the Hides and Tallow Importation Bill were severally read a third time and passed, and ordered back to the Commons.—A person from the Exchequer Office in Ireland presented at the bar certain documents respecting the case of Redington v. Redington, which is to be heard before their Lordships.—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, March 21.

[MINUTES.]—Dr. Grey presented at the bar the account of the trustees for the Bri-

tish Museum.—Mr. Alexander brought up the report of the Sugar Warehousing Bill.—Also the report of the Expiring Laws Bill.—The Chancellor of the Exchequer informed the House from the bar, that his Majesty had been waited on with the addresses of the House of the 13th of Feb. and of the 15th of March, which his Majesty had received graciously.—A message from the Lords acquainted the House that their Lordships had agreed to the Irish Duties' Bill, the Irish Malt Duty Bill, the Irish Countervailing Duty Bill, and the Neutral Ships' Bill, without any amendment.

[LISKEARD ELECTION.]—Mr. W. Dundas stated to the House, that he held in his hand a petition, which was deserving the attention of the House. The petition was from William Huskisson, Esq. who had been returned by the returning officer for the borough of Liskeard, as duly elected at the last election, but who, on coming to town to take his seat, found that the under sheriff of the county of Cornwall had transmitted to the clerk of the crown the return, but accompanied with a piece of parchment, purporting to be another return of T. Sheridan, Esq. for the same borough, but which parchment was neither signed nor sealed with the arms of the borough by the returning officer. The petitioner, therefore, appealed to the justice of the House, trusting, that as but one legal return had been made, he should not be prevented from taking his seat until after the decision of a Committee. Having stated thus much, Mr. Dundas wished to abide the sense of the House as to the course he should adopt.

The *Speaker* informed the hon. member, that, if the petition complained of an undue return in the usual way, it might be presented as a matter of course; but being such as the hon. member had stated, it could not be brought up without first putting the question on it.

Mr. Pitt observed, that, according to the facts, if they were truly stated, it appeared that only one valid return had been made by the sheriff, the course for the House therefore to adopt, would be to order the deputy clerk of the Crown to attend at the bar with the last return, in order to ascertain the truth of the facts. If it should appear that only one instrument had the seal and signature of the returning officer, then unquestionably but one valid return had been made.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that feeling, as every member of the Parliament did, a strong jealousy on every question relating to elections, if any evidence was to be taken, or witnesses examined, he

had no hesitation in saying, that the petition should go to a committee.

The petition was then ordered to lie on the table, and the deputy clerk of the Crown was ordered to attend to-morrow with the last return for the borough of Liskeard.

[NAVAL SURPLUS.] — The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* in a Committee of the whole House to consider of ways and means for raising a supply granted to his Majesty, said, if gentlemen would look to page 3 of the accounts of the grants for the service of the year 1803, they would find that the grants for the naval service of that year amounted to 9,951,378*l.*, the demands for the service of that department amounted to 8,174,711*l.*; the grants had, therefore, exceeded the demand by 1,776,667*l.* This being the case, he should propose, as was the usual custom, to grant the surplus towards the ways and means for raising the supply to be granted to his Majesty for the present year, if it were not for a circumstance in the 11th page. This was, that several payments had been made for other services not belonging to the year 1803, amounting to 579,706*l.* These demands all made by authority of acts of Parliament, had been satisfied by the Admiralty, out of the ways and means of the year. It was usual when the vote was insufficient for the service, to move the Committee of Supply to make good the deficiency. There the grant was more than sufficient, and the surplus would of course be carried to the service of the year. The surplus was reduced by the payments here advanced to 1,370,669*l.* It was necessary to apprise the Committee that the surplus of 1,766,000*l.*, was not to be considered as a saving in expenditure. It was not to be understood, that the expense was so much less than the sum voted. There was an increase of navy debt to the amount of 931,352*l.* The amount being on the 1st Dec. 1802, 3,105,648*l.* On the 1st Dec. 1803, 4,037,000*l.* This accumulation to the debt, was wholly unavoidable, arising from navy bills not being presented for payment, and the arrears of pay due to seamen on foreign stations, the navy debt must always be increased or diminished. All that was necessary on the part of the Treasury, was to provide the means of satisfying the demands when made, and when the demands were not made, though the Treasury should be full of money, the debt must remain undiminished. This sum of 931,352*l.* must therefore be deducted from 1,776,667*l.*, leaving the real amount of the

sum beyond what was necessary for the service of the last year 845,315*l.* As it was not necessary, however, to keep the means of satisfying such an amount of debt, the greater part of which may not be called for for several years, it was his intention to move the House to have the whole sum of 1,370,669*l.* applied to other services, diminishing per tanto the loan, or other ways and means for the present year. He moved accordingly, that towards raising the supply to be granted to his Majesty, there be voted 1,307,644*l.* 4*s.* 8*d.* from the surplus of the grants for the service of the year 1803.

Lord Folkestone thought it was a fallacy to suppose there was a surplus; if gentlemen would look to the last page of the paper where the several sums are made up, no account had been presented this year of the produce of the consolidated fund, there was, therefore, no reason to suppose that the consolidated fund had afforded the surplus of 6,500,000*l.* anticipated from it. On that, however, he laid no stress, as there was no proof one way or the other before the House. But with respect to the war taxes, the produce of which was estimated at 4,500,000*l.* it was found by an account presented six weeks since, that they had produced something less than 1,900,000*l.*, leaving a deficiency of 2,600,000*l.* which would reduce the surplus now proposed to be voted to a deficit of 1,300,000*l.* If the 931,000*l.* added to the navy debt were deducted from the surplus of 1,766,000*l.* there would remain a sum of above 800,000*l.* of the grant of last year unapplied, which he thought extraordinary at a time when every exertion should be made in the naval department, and the House was intitled to expect forces equal to the amount of the sum granted. He wished, and he thought it would be more satisfactory to have the amount of the saving in each item particularly stated. The noble lord then adverted to the account of the disposition of the grants for the land service, which stated the number of regular forces at 65,574 effective men. A noble lord (Castlereagh) had stated them at near 30,000 more. He wished to know whether the noble Lord included in his statement the army of reserve, or what it was that occasioned the difference of the statements. Another item was the grant of 1,500,000*l.* to enable his Majesty to take such measures as the exigencies of affairs may require. Of the distribution of this sum no satisfactory account was given. He thought it a fallacy after all this, to call on the House to vote a surplus.

Mr. *Vansittart* stated the surplus of the consolidated fund for the year 1803, voted at 6,500,000*l.* to have produced 5,600,000*l.* in Jan. last. The remaining 900,000*l.* was to be made good out of the produce exported in January, but not yet derived. With respect to the produce of the war taxes, it was not in Jan., but on the 5th of April, that they were calculated to produce 4,500,000*l.* The war taxes differed from the surplus of the consolidated fund in this, that the surplus could not be taken till the accounts were made up, whereas the war taxes were derivable as they went on. In the last week there had been paid in, on account of the war taxes, 3,131,000*l.* leaving 1,379,000*l.* to be made good by the 5th of April. Whether it would be made good, remains to be seen. The accounts now presented were in the usual form. The balances were not expected to be stated item by item as they arose. In answer to the observation of his noble friend's (Lord Castlereagh) statement of the amount of the forces, he had only to observe, that his noble friend included in his statement other descriptions of force not included in the 66,000, but mentioned in other parts of the paper. It did not appear yet, whether there was any excess in the military department. As to the vote of credit for 1,500,000*l.* there was every year an account of the application of that vote. That account would be soon made out, and laid before the House. The reason why a small part of the vote of credit, 5,000*l.* remained on hand, was, that it was inapplicable to the service of the preceding year. For the same reason there was 900,000*l.* of new taxes now laying unapplied.

Mr. *Johnstone* wished to know, whether the saving in the naval department was owing to the economy of the present Board of Admiralty, or the consequence of fewer seamen being employed than were voted?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that the saving was in a great measure owing to economy in the Admiralty, but also in a considerable degree to there not having been as great a number of seamen in the early part of the year as had been voted. The demands for naval service were, however, so extraordinary and unprecedented, that it was matter of surprise and joy that any saving should have been made, and that that expense did not even exceed the estimate. This was the more extraordinary, as the number of seamen and marines now on board was not 1,500 short of the number voted by parliament. He did not wish to give all the merit of the saving to economy, but if there had not been economy, instead

of a saving Parliament would have an excess to make good.

Mr. *Sturges Bourne* wished to know whether there were any documents relating to the particulars of the savings?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that no such accounts had been given in the last war, and in the present instance, when the ablest financier of England (Mr. Pitt), one who combined the largest with the most minute view, was present when the accounts were referred to the committee, and made no remark on them, there was reason to suppose they were correct.—Some further conversation ensued between Mr. Tierney, Lord Folkestone and Mr. Vansittart, in the course of which Mr. Vansittart stated, in answer to a question asked upon the subject, that the monies already paid into the Exchequer on account of the property tax, amounted to 1,260,000*l.*—The motion was at length agreed to, and the House having resumed, the report was ordered to be received to-morrow, and the committee to sit again on Friday.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday March 22.

Several bills were brought up from the Commons, which were read a first time.—On the question for going into a Committee on the Irish Priests' and Deacons' Bill.—Lord Ellenborough moved that the consideration of the present bill be postponed.—The commitment of the bill in question was accordingly postponed till this day month.—The bills on the table were then forwarded, and the House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, March 22.

[NAVAL SURPLUS.] — Mr. Alexander brought up the report of the Committee of Ways and Means of yesterday.—The resolution for appropriating the surplus of 1,370,674*l.* of the grants of the navy being read,

Lord Folkestone repeated the observations which he had made in the Committee, that instead of a surplus, there was a deficit in the supplies of last year. He had recurred to the only documents which he could consult on the subject, namely, the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the Budget, and, he contended, that bore him out in the observation. The war taxes had

been estimated at 4,500,000*l.* for the year, and it appeared by the accounts on the table, that they only produced 1,900,000*l.* previous to the 5th Jan. to which date, not the 5th of April, the taxes of the year were calculated. He should wish to be informed what had produced the deficiency of near 8,000,000*l.* from the sum of 12,000,000*l.* which had been once held out as the amount of the war taxes?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* justified his statement of yesterday in every particular. He referred to the documents whence he drew his conclusion, and entered on the different items which were formerly stated. He expressed a sanguine hope, that the produce of some of the taxes, would exceed considerably the sums at which they have been estimated.—The resolution was then put and agreed to.

[*MEDIATION OF RUSSIA.*].—*Mr. Fox.*—Sir; I take this opportunity of putting a question to the right hon. gent. opposite to me, upon the subject of an answer which he gave to me, respecting the mediation of Russia. I understood at that time there would be no general objection to giving this House information on that subject; that I understood to be said most clearly and distinctly, but that then circumstances which were not likely to be of long duration prevented ministers from making any communication upon that subject to the House; since which time 4 months have elapsed. What I now wish to know of the right hon. gent. is, whether those circumstances still stand in the way of such communication?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer.*—Sir; on the 22d of Nov. last, there were circumstances which, in the opinion of his Majesty's ministers, precluded any communication to this House upon the subject to which the hon. gent. has adverted. But it was then intimated, that if these circumstances did not exist there might be other circumstances which, in the opinion of his Majesty's ministers, might render a communication improper, even although those circumstances which precluded any communication did not exist: and now other circumstances do exist, and they so far operate on the minds of his Majesty's ministers as to convince them they ought not to advise his Majesty to direct any communication to be made upon that subject at the present moment.

Mr. Fox—I am often unfortunate in my recollection of the statement of facts as they usually come from the bench opposite to me, and never was more so than in the present

instance; for I have not the smallest trace in my mind, nor any ground for conceiving anything of what was said against this communication, but the circumstances which the right hon. gent. alluded to in the first part of his speech to-night, viz. those circumstances which then precluded his Majesty's ministers from making any communication to the House upon the subject, and which were not expected to be of long duration; and what I certainly understood was, that afterwards ministers would be happy to give information on that interesting subject. Not a word do I recollect as having struck my ear of those other circumstances which the right hon. gent. states as reasons for not making any communication whatever upon the subject. We must, however, of course, be all inaccurate, for I must give credit to the right hon. gentleman's explanation of what was said upon that subject, and I must now understand, that other circumstances besides those that immediately precluded ministers from making a communication might have been looked for.—Here the conversation dropped.

[*LISKEARD ELECTION.*].—*Mr. Sheridan* presented a petition, on behalf of Mr. H. Burgess, of Curzon Street, May Fair, and other, setting forth the particulars of the double return for the above Borough. Ordered to be laid on the table. The proceedings of the election and the return, were then read, by which Mr. Huskisson was returned by indenture, and Mr. T. Sheridan also, in another instrument, purporting to be a return, said to be elected. A question arose, whether this latter piece of parchment was a return or not; the case appeared extremely doubtful, whether this matter ought to go to a Committee to be decided by them, or whether the House should not decide the matter of itself, on account of the parchment stating the return of Mr. T. Sheridan to be no return. The House, however, at last thought the better and safer way would be to refer the matter to a Select Committee.

[*VOLUNTEER CONSOLIDATION BILL.*].—*Mr. Secretary Yorke* moved the order of the day for the third reading of the Volunteer Consolidation Bill.

Mr. Langton adverted to what he had formerly said upon that part of the bill which related to the right of resignation, the substance of which had been adopted, and without which he was apprehensive that great discontent would have prevailed. He had now no opposition to offer to the passing of the bill.

Colonel *Craufurd*.—Sir, it is with very sincere regret that I feel myself under the necessity of again addressing you on a subject which has already occupied so much of our time; but although it would give me great concern to find that the House considered me as inclined to abuse that indulgence which I experienced from them, when delivering my opinions—pretty much at length in an early stage of this bill, yet I feel myself impelled by a strong sense of duty, rather to incur this risk, than to neglect any opportunity of expressing my most complete disapprobation of this and every other branch of the system pursued by his Majesty's ministers in the administration of the military affairs of the country. I am, indeed, aware, Sir, that in taking the present occasion of doing so, I labour under considerable disadvantages: for notwithstanding the importance of the subject (and surely none can be more important than this, which involves the consideration of all the means by which the great physical strength of this country may be best applied to repelling the most formidable invasion that ever was prepared against it), yet I say, Sir, notwithstanding the importance of the subject, I cannot but feel some apprehension that the House may (for the present, at least) be almost tired of hearing it discussed, when I recollect, that within these last 7 or 8 months, his Majesty's ministers have brought in no less than 5 different bills on this one subject; and that this last, which was meant to consolidate the whole, this bill, of which they gave us notice before the Christmas recess, has at length been laid before us in such a state, that it was found necessary for it to be committed and re-committed no less than 4 times, in the course of which it has received an addition of 24 entirely new clauses, besides numerous and considerable alterations and amendments in almost all the original ones. I am aware, Sir, that those gent. who have taken so much pains to correct and amend this bill, and to make it what it is, must be inclined to hope that the system which it contains may be of some duration; and that they cannot be disposed to lend a very favourable ear to those who presume (like myself) to tell them that they have been proceeding upon principles altogether erroneous, and that the whole work, therefore, requires a complete and fundamental revision. Sir I, too, am as desirous as any man can pos-

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sibly be, that our military system should be established on a permanent basis; for until this is done, we can never enjoy that tranquillity arising from a consciousness of our strength, without which we must gradually lose our consideration and influence amongst the nations of Europe, and must, upon every recurring emergency, be again exposed to that fluctuation of councils, and that sort of feverish uneasiness which we have lately experienced. But in proportion as I am anxious to see our military system placed upon a permanent footing, just in the same proportion must I be anxious to see the *present* one undergo a complete alteration; for in every branch of it I find much to censure in what has been done, and much to regret in what has been omitted. With respect to our *regular army*, that force, without which we can never be either respected by our friends, or dreaded by our enemies, or secure at home; that, which ought to be the first and greatest object of our solicitude, but which evidently is the last at least; with respect to our regular army, I say, the measures which are now pursuing render it every day more and more impossible that it should be recruited; for we are every day holding out additional inducements, and offering men new bounties *not* to enlist into it. In the militia, for instance, a man gets 15 guineas bounty for 5 years service; and if he has a wife and family, they are provided for during his absence from home: in the army of reserve he gets a bounty of from 35 to 50 guineas for 5 years service *within* the realm, with a similar provision for his wife and children: in the volunteer corps, exclusive of other advantages, he has also that of having his wife and children taken care of by the parish, if he is called out of it; and under all these circumstances you expect, that for a bounty of 8 or 10 guineas a man will enlist in the regular army, binding himself *for life* to serve in whatever part of the world it may be his fate to be sent to, and leaving his wife and children to starve; for the provision which is made for the families of men in other branches of the public force, is withheld from those of the regular soldier. Under these circumstances, I say it is impossible that we should have an army; nor can we expect to have one, until those measures are adopted which have been so often recommended by my right hon. friend below me (Mr. Windham). I shall not tire the

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House by repeating what he has urged with so much more force; but to the opinions which he has so frequently expressed upon this subject of the army, I do most entirely subscribe. With respect to the *militia*, I certainly think that it was extremely unwise to extend, so far beyond its ancient limits, a force, to which there is this objection at least (and I think there are many others), that it is not applicable to the general defence of the empire. And then, Sir, as to this part of the public force which is now more immediately under consideration, what is called the *volunteer system*, I really think, that from beginning to end, it affords the most manifest proofs of the extremely injudicious manner in which his Majesty's ministers have used the great powers with which Parliament invested them. Instead of a force comprising all the flower and strength of the population of the country, they have created one, from whose ranks are excluded three-fourths of the men most capable of defending it. Instead of a force which would have been contemplated with admiration and affection by every (even the poorest) man of every parish that sent it forth, they have constituted a privileged body, the object of envy and dislike to the poorer and more numerous classes of the community, oppressed as they are, and disgusted as they must be at those exemptions granted to the volunteers by which the whole weight of the ballots (operating as a heavy pecuniary tax) is thrown upon those who are least capable of bearing it. Instead of a force established upon a basis as extensive as the population, as permanent as the constitution of the country, they have created one which is insufficient even now and of which the ministers, who are its warmest advocates, have lately told us, that it is impossible to pronounce how great a defalcation of its numbers may shortly be expected—a force, which when Parliament assembles to frame laws for its government, or regulations for its improvement, you are told, not that these laws are unjust, not that these regulations are unnecessary, but that they will not be agreeable to the volunteers; such a force, in short, that his Majesty's ministers, or their nearest connections, have lately desired us to consider that it is a most delicate machine. But really, Sir, a delicate machine is not very fit for the purposes of war; machines that are meant for war, should be formed

of tough and hardy materials, so strongly put together, as to be able to withstand the rudest shocks. In fine, Sir, I completely disapprove of the plan that his Majesty's ministers are pursuing with respect to the army, the militia, and the volunteers; and as to that fourth species of defence, from which we might have derived great additional strength and security, I mean *fortification*, I only name it now for the purpose of repeating, that it has been either wholly misunderstood, or completely neglected.—From this general view of our present military system, I am fully convinced of the absolute necessity of its immediately undergoing a complete revision. If we had time to wait for its being brought about by degrees, I should rest satisfied with the assurance, that there are causes inherent in it which will in time evince, more forcibly than can now be done by argument, the validity of those objections which have been urged against it; but whilst we are waiting for the gradual operation of these inherent causes, difficulties and disasters of the greatest magnitude may come upon us, which might have been avoided by the timely adoption of a better system. I am aware, however, that to effect so complete a change, in presence, as it were, of an enemy who is almost, or perhaps quite, prepared to attack us, is a difficult though necessary operation. Our situation certainly requires that nothing should be undone, until something better is ready to be substituted in its place. And when I consider how insufficient is the foundation of our present system, and how defective the superstructure, I am quite convinced, that to strengthen the one, and improve the other, without bringing the whole fabric to the ground, requires abler artists than those by whom it has been erected. I say, Sir, that to make our military system what it ought to be, requires far abler heads than those who made it what it is. In saying this, I am not actuated by any private or personal motives whatever: but I certainly should not be surprised if I was told, that in so frequently criticising the military measures, my only object is to find fault with ministers; for I have lately heard such things said in this House respecting the motives of those who condemn their conduct, that I shall not hereafter be much surprised at any thing that may be thought about my own. I was, indeed, completely astonished, when, upon

a motion lately made for an inquiry into the conduct of the Irish government, we were told by a right hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Tierney), in the most unqualified terms, that the motion was a mere trick, contrived for the purpose of bringing together two or three discordant parties in opposition to his Majesty's government. I was also not less astonished, when, upon an inquiry into the state of the navy being moved for by a man, scarcely, less distinguished for his incorruptible purity and immovable fortitude, than for his extraordinary talents, we were told by the same right hon. gent. (Mr. Tierney), that his conduct smelt of a contract, or that he was acting under the influence of panic. For my own part, I am not disposed to call in question the motives of gent. on the other side of the House; but I should be glad to know upon what grounds it is that his Majesty's present ministers can be supposed to possess more vigour and fortitude than other men: I should be glad to know, since when it is that purity and patriotism have been confined to the precincts of the Treasury, or of Somerset-house: I should be glad to know, why those who uniformly support the measures of an administration, which nine-tenths of the thinking men of the country believe to be totally unequal to the direction of public affairs in the present emergency, are entitled to more credit for sincerity than those who openly avow in this House the same opinions which the great majority of the public entertains respecting them? And that the great majority of the men of sense in the kingdom do consider the ministers to be unfit for their present situations, I believe to be the truth.—Sir, I am sorry to have been led into this digression: and to return to the subject immediately before us, I must say, that whatever is good or admirable in the volunteer force, has sprung up and maintained itself, not only independently, but in despite of his Majesty's ministers. What I admire in the volunteers, is that patriotic zeal and excellent spirit by which they are animated: but to what is it owing that this spirit was called forth? It arose from a conviction that their country was in danger: and to whom are we indebted for having impressed this conviction on the public mind? Is it to his Majesty's ministers, who, actuated by a sort of Stock-exchange policy, did, as we well recollect, use their utmost endeavours to prevent its

being believed that we were in danger of the enemy's effecting a powerful invasion? Or was not the salutary alarm which gave birth to this spirit of resistance, rather to be attributed to my right hon. friend (Mr. Windham), whose patriotic labours in the two last sessions have been such as to deserve, and I hope to acquire for him, the gratitude of his country.—As to the manner in which his Majesty's ministers have taken advantage of this spirit, which they did not rouse, and of those powers which Parliament put into their hands, I shall not now take up the time of the House by entering much at large into the objections to their measures, which I have frequently urged on former occasions: but as I know not when I may have another opportunity of saying any thing upon this most important subject, I cannot help again adverting to those which are of the greatest magnitude. The principal defect in the whole volunteer system is the manner in which it is *composed*? that is to say, that according to the confession of his Majesty's ministers, you have not above one-fourth the first class of men as described in the defence act. It is notorious, that a great many of the volunteers are men, who, from age or bodily infirmities, are unable to perform the duties of a soldier in the field: and a much greater number still consists of men whose circumstances are such as would render it ruinous to them and to the country, that they should be long absent from home. If a volunteer corps, composed as most of them are, was called out to a distance from home, all the business of the country to which it belongs must stand still; for every farm, manufactory, or shop, in short, almost every establishment would be deprived of its head and director; and, exclusive of the injury done to the individuals, the country and community at large would be thereby thrown into a state of the greatest confusion. The military operations, too, would be equally embarrassed, by having your force so composed; for although these men would come out with great spirit and a determination to fight with courage, yet they would also come with an impatience to have the thing immediately brought to an issue. If you give way to this impatience, you engage, perhaps, very prematurely in a decisive operation; and if you do not, you may see half your volunteers returning home before anything is decided. I do not

positively assert that this would be the case; it is impossible to guess how far the spirit of the people may carry them; but I say, that expecting men, such as a great part of our volunteer corps are composed of, to remain long as private soldiers in the field, is expecting much more than we know any example of ever having been done in any other country; and I think it would have been much wiser to have composed this force of men more fit for the duties you may have occasion to require of them.—The distribution is also extremely injudicious. It occurred, I suppose, as an easy way of settling the numbers, to say we will have six times the militia; the consequence of which is, that the country the most remote from danger has as great a number of men armed, as the one most exposed.—Then, Sir, as to the exemptions, although so much has been said about them, I cannot take leave of the subject without making some remarks upon what has been urged by gentlemen on the other side, in answer to our objections. It is contended, I confess, to my great surprise, that the exemptions do not interfere with the ballots or recruiting of the army or militia. They say, that very few of the balloted men, serve in person: (an hon. general has stated a regiment of the reserve in which there is only one principal,) and that, therefore, the exemptions do not prevent the effect of the ballots. But I ask them, have the ballots produced men in any way, or have they not? If they have not, then abolish them; but if they have (as is certainly the case), then I say, that it is impossible that the exemptions should not have interfered with their operation. If the balloted men do not serve, then the manner in which the ballots produce men is, that people enlist for the bounty rather than run the risk of being drawn and obliged to serve for nothing; and in proportion as the volunteer corps do contain men of that description that enter the army or militia, the exemptions must necessarily produce this effect at least, that you have fewer men disposed to take the bounty for the sake of avoiding the ballot. But even admitting, for the sake of argument, that the exemptions do not in any way diminish the number of recruits, is it nothing that you throw the whole weight of the ballots (which the advocates for exemptions describe as being merely a pecuniary tax) upon that class of men least capable of bearing it? Are

we to consider it as nothing in point of humanity, that the necessities of the poorest class of the community are thus increased by the exemptions granted to men, who, generally speaking, are in affluent circumstances? Are we to consider it as nothing in point of policy, that the great mass of the nation are disgusted, and feel themselves oppressed, by our adopting a system of taxation the most opposite to every principle of justice? And let it be observed too, that amongst the people thus disgusted, are (as I said before) three-fourths of those whom you ought to be the most desirous of having under arms (I mean the first class), but whom the exemptions prevent your being able to admit into your ranks: for it is impossible to have some volunteers with exemptions and others without them; and so long as the ballots exist, you cannot think of exempting from their operation the whole of the men most fit to serve. You must, therefore, abolish either the exemptions or the ballots; for until you do either the one or the other, you cannot arm the flower of the population, that is to say, you cannot have what I and others have called an armed peasantry.—And here, Sir, I must remark, that when on a former occasion I recommended a force of this description, and at the same time censured the measures of his Majesty's ministers, I and other gentlemen who agreed with me, were greatly misunderstood; and with respect to myself, I may say, that I was not very fairly treated. In the first place, it was said on that occasion, that I appeared to be more disposed to describe and dwell upon the prowess of the French army than of our own. Now, I will appeal to every man who heard me, whether it was possible to express greater admiration of the English army than I did? I said, in as strong terms as I could use, that it contains the essence of every thing that is excellent; and that if you would but give it men enough, it would be as good an army as any in the universe. I said this; and I sincerely think it; but I am not so blinded by natural prejudices as to believe that there is no other good one. I believe the French army to be excellent also; its qualities are different from ours; in some respects it is inferior, in others superior; but take it all in all, I do not believe that there is a better army in Europe than the French: and I never will follow the example of those gent. who seem

to think that in order to encourage our volunteers, you must persuade them that they have only to contend with a set of miserable slaves and conscripts. I say, Sir, I can never entertain so mean an opinion of the courage of my countrymen, as to suppose it necessary to represent the enemy whom they have to fight other than what he really is.—But then again, they say, that the manner in which I talk of our volunteers, tends to discourage the people. Now, Sir, I think it is rather extraordinary that I, who say that every peasant in the country may materially contribute to the defeat of the enemy, should be accused of discouraging the nation; and that this accusation should come from persons, who treat with the greatest ridicule all the efforts that the people can make, if not clothed in red, and trained to the Prussian tactics. This is a subject upon which it is not very pleasant to be so misrepresented; and I deny that I ever used any language of a sort to discourage any part of our force. Do I say, disband the irregulars, for they can be of no use? quite the contrary: I say, add 2 or 300,000 stout able-bodied men to their numbers. Do I say the volunteers cannot fight the French? No; but I recommend that you should not employ them in the manner which I think least calculated to enable them to fight with advantage. They would have plenty of fighting if employed in the way that I wish; but would not be exposed to defeat, so much as if you attempt to make them troops of the line. Then, as to the training, it is said, would you have them unlearn all they have learnt? To which I answer, that I would have them learn what is more useful than what they have learnt; I would have them learn to act more loosely like light infantry. Now, upon this subject, a right hon. gent. (Mr. Pitt) has told us, that the opinion of some of the best officers with whom he has conversed is, that in training men to act as light infantry, you ought to begin by teaching them that regular sort of tactics that our volunteers have been learning: and, therefore, upon this principle, to do what I propose would not be, to undo what has been done, but to proceed one step further towards what that right hon. gent. has described as being the last stage of instruction.—What I say then is, not that the volunteers as they now are will be of any use; but that what I have called an armed peasantry, that is to say, a force less expensively

dressed, trained less like the troops of the line, but containing all the youngest, stoutest and hardest men in the country, 3-fourths of whom are now unarmed, would have been a more powerful force: and this difference of the numbers and description of men is the main point; though I am far from thinking that the mode of training, or even the dress are unimportant considerations. And now, Sir, I cannot help taking this opportunity of noticing what passed, when I once quoted the instance of La Vendée, as a proof of what can be effected by an armed peasantry. It was then urged, that this was a case by no means in point; but I think that the whole objection proceeded from a misunderstanding of what had been proposed by us. The Vendéans it was said, became soldiers by long endurance, after suffering great disasters, during which the enemy carried fire and sword into every cottage in the country; and we are asked whether we have made up our minds to undergo similar calamities? or even, if we have, whether we suppose that the enemy would stop in the maritime counties to subdue the inhabitants, or would not rather pass rapidly through them, pushing forward to the capital?—And whether an armed peasantry could stop his progress? Now, Sir, this would have been a very natural answer if it had been proposed to rest our defence solely on our armed peasantry; and really, whoever had heard this answer must have imagined that we had recommended a large and perfectly irregular force in preference to a regular army. But what did we propose? A right hon. gent. (Mr. Fox) who may be supposed to be less partial than some other gentlemen are to a large regular army, says, "Have an army as good and as numerous as you can; but after all your exertions, it is possible that the enemy may bring one as numerous and as good as your own: and therefore, in addition to your army, have that which an invading army cannot have, namely, an armed people." Another right hon. gent. (Mr. Windham) has for these last twelve-months incessantly exerted himself in this House to enforce the necessity of increasing to the utmost our troops of the line. As for myself, no man can be more convinced than I am, and have always expressed myself to be, that neither the Vendéan war, nor any other, can with truth be quoted as affording any argument in favour of our trusting to a mass of irregu-

lars instead of a regular army. What I say is, have as great a number as possible of troops of the line. In addition to these, and to your militia, have a large reserve, ready to be embodied and thrown into the regiments when the invasion takes place: have a judicious system of fortification for the better defence of parts of your coast, of your arsenals, and your capital; and 4thly, I say, *in aid* of all these other means, have an armed peasantry: and all that has been said about the difference between our situation and that of the Vendéans or Americans, although it certainly proves that we cannot be safe without a large regular army, does not prove that, as a *subsidiary* force, the volunteers as they now exist, are better than the armed peasantry which I have described. Other objections have been made to this armed peasantry, as if I had proposed a great unorganized mass, incapable of being moved; and it has been said that those of the inland counties could not be brought into action until the enemy should have penetrated into the heart of the kingdom: I certainly never had in contemplation a body of such a description: what I mean is, that the great mass of the people should indeed be armed in *certain districts*, but that throughout the *whole* kingdom the young and able-bodied men, the elite of the whole peasantry of the country should be formed into companies and battalions, which, so far from being an immoveable force (as it has been called) would be much fitter to march and remain away from home than our present volunteers are.—There is another topic, Sir, which though it is not immediately connected with the present bill, it cannot I think be irregular for me to notice, as it is mentioned in the papers that were laid before us when the bill was introduced; I mean the encouragement which is held out to people not only to drive the country, but to destroy the provisions. As to driving the country, the attempt will, I think, be productive of much inconvenience to ourselves, and in other respects perfectly nugatory; unless, indeed, the measure was confined to the removing of all the horses and draft cattle. This latter, if completely effected would be a most important advantage, and would certainly embarrass the enemy to the greatest degree; and I have no doubt that it may be accomplished, if nothing further be attempted; but if we undertake a general driving of the country, the probabi-

lity is, that the confusion it will occasion, may terminate in our allowing even the horses and draft cattle to fall into the enemy's hands.—With respect to the measure of destroying provisions, I do think that it would be indeed disgraceful to adopt so barbarous a system of defence as this; and that by so doing, we should inflict upon ourselves far greater evils than even the enemy, if properly opposed, would be able or would venture to inflict upon us. Sir, I am sorry to have taken up the time of the House upon subjects that have been so often discussed; but they are so important that I could not consistently with what I feel to be my duty, omit this opportunity of reurging my opinions upon them.

After a loud cry of Question! Question! from the ministerial benches.

Mr. *Windham* rose. He confessed that he felt no surprise at the uneasiness which Ministers betrayed by their cry for the question to get rid of the measure before the House. It had certainly given them much trouble, and was likely to give them and the country much more. They might, however, state, as a justification for the silence which they seemed willing to preserve upon this occasion, that all the arguments used by his hon. friend who had just sat down had been advanced before. This might be for the most part true, but he would ask, whether those arguments had ever been answered, and whether they did not remain entirely unrefuted? If so, then, they ought to be repeated, in order, if possible, to persuade the pertinacious adherents of this dangerous system to yield to their force, and to resort to measures more consonant to wisdom, and better calculated to secure the safety of the country. But, perhaps, Ministers had exhausted their eloquence upon this subject, by the four-and-twenty new clauses, which they had introduced, and being tired of amendment and re-amendment, of commitment and recommitment, of propositions and recantations, were anxious to send the measure out of the House, without any more words about it. To their wishes, however, he was not disposed to yield, and as this was perhaps the last opportunity of speaking upon this bill, he would avail himself of it to enter his solemn protest against a measure which he thought, if persisted in, would lead to little short of absolute ruin. This sentence, however harsh, he could not hesi-

tate to pronounce, as the full conviction of his mind. The House, he observed, had never yet taken a distinct view of the question. One way of shewing what the question was, was to shew what it was not. It was not a question between volunteers and no volunteers; between a system such as was now proposed, and no system at all; between the present bill and a total absence of that force to which the present bill was meant to apply. Any gent. might easily satisfy himself upon that point, by only considering whether he should suppose, if the present bill had never been brought in, that all volunteer force would have ceased. The bill, therefore, was not necessary to the *existence* of a volunteer force; its object both was and professed to be, to improve a force of that description which already subsisted, and which would continue to subsist though no such bill should be brought in; and the objection on the part of himself and others who thought with him on this occasion, was, that the improvement to be obtained was in many of its parts doubtful, that it was not applicable to much of that for which it professed to be intended, and that it was at all events not worth the price that must be paid for it; for that independent of other considerations, though the bill might in the end do something for bettering the volunteers, it would in the mean while operate most injuriously on every other species of force, and finally deprive us of that species which was confessedly the most valuable, he meant a regular army. This was the view to be taken of the question, and these the several points of comparison, by the result of which the question must be determined.—To assist the judgment of the House in forming that comparison, it would be right to consider some of the general reasonings on which all the measures adopted for some time past seemed to have been founded.—These would for the most part, be reducible to the three or four following propositions: 1st, that the prospect of an immediate attack from the enemy, though not absolutely certain, was so nearly so, that persons must act precisely as if its certainty was assured to them. 2ndly, that this danger, thus certain and immediate, was of a nature so disproportionate to every other, that nothing could be allowed to come in competition with it, or could be regarded for the time otherwise than as it could be made consistent with that great

and over-ruling object. 3rdly, That the improvement of the volunteers was, in the actual state of things, the means most effectual that could be taken for guarding against this danger, and, consequently, must be pursued, even supposing (what was not admitted) that it was injurious in many other respects, and was inconsistent with those provisions and establishments which would be most conducive to the safety of the country in future. These propositions, every one of which ought to be true, to support the measures which had been built upon them, were nevertheless, he would venture to say, every one of them false. To the first, which said that such was the probability of an immediate attack, that our conduct must be the same as if the event were certain, the answer was, that our language and our actions were wholly at variance with each other, and that nothing could be more evident, than, that while we talked this language, we ourselves had no belief in the truth of it; for that, if we had, it was impossible to suppose that we should content ourselves with such precautions merely as those which we were taking. It was in vain, therefore, to attempt to rest any measure upon the ground that we were to consider the present danger otherwise than as one which, though probable in a high degree, might nevertheless not happen.—The other proposition, that, namely, which related to the *magnitude* of the danger, which would confine the whole of our thoughts and exertions to the business of present defence, and would allow of no competition between that and any other object, was a question of somewhat greater extent, and required a more particular examination. It was always forgot or dissembled in talking upon this subject, that cases of present danger were to be distinguished into two sorts, viz. those in which the danger being present, was present merely, and, if it should happily be escaped, would be succeeded by a state of ordinary security; and those in which the danger, though present, was only the commencement of a long course of danger, which might last with more or less interruption and remission, and possibly with great occasional increase, for a period, as was well stated in the present instance, of which the youngest of us might not live to see the conclusion. In the latter of these cases, it was idle to say, that we could confine

our thoughts merely to the consideration of the danger of the moment. We could not do so, without an abandonment of all the principles of right reason, and of civil prudence, both public and private. It might be admitted, if any one pleased, that the character of the present danger was such as to allow of no comparison with any consideration of a different sort; that no thought of future prosperity or greatness, of riches, of commerce, or any other object of national interest, could be opposed to that first and paramount consideration, the salvation and actual existence of the state. But the comparison which he was contending for, and which the present case required, was not of safety against interest, life against money, &c. &c.,—quantities between which there might be no comparison or proportion, but of safety against safety, danger against danger, the danger of the present moment against that of the next and every one that was to succeed it. There was the same fallacy in the reasonings which he was adverting to, as occurred often in discussions upon the treaty of Amiens, and other occasions of that sort, where the question used to be described as a question between war and peace. The answer was, that it was not a question between war and peace, but, as we now experienced to our cost, between war and war—war such as it was at that time, and war such as we now find it to be, when we are shut up as prisoners in our own island, and are fighting; not to conquer the enemy, but to preserve ourselves from destruction. We must inevitably, therefore, and whether we would or no, take into our consideration the interests of future moments, as well as of the present, and not be guilty of the folly of trying to save ourselves from the present danger, by means that must ensure our perishing under the self-same danger the moment after. The only possible case in which we could justify the disregard of all precautions for our future safety, would be, the certainty that the present danger must overwhelm us. If he were sure that he must perish to-day, he might safely neglect all provision for to-morrow: but if he were not sure of perishing to-day, and that the danger was of that sort which, even if averted for the moment, would not thereby cease and pass away, he must, upon every principle of reason, in considering the means necessary for his present safety, have a view

to the dangers which were immediately to succeed.—Under this conviction, therefore, and upon these principles, the House must come to the consideration of that third proposition which he had adverted to, and on which the present bill was founded; namely, that the improvement of the volunteer system, supposing it to be the best for present defence, was for that reason, and without further inquiry, to be adopted. Two questions were for this purpose equally important. Was the improvement of the volunteer system, the measure most efficacious for present defence? And admitting it even to be so, was it the measure (taking in, agreeably to what he had just been contending for, both present and future dangers) which would most conduce to our safety upon the whole, and for that reason to be adopted, whatever objections might be urged against it in other respects? To these a third might be added, which he would not stop to argue at length: was it certain, that by the measures now proposed, the force of the volunteers would, in reality, receive any addition? The question must not be wholly passed by, nor dismissed, without a word or two of observation. Though it might be admitted, that greater allowances in money, by enabling the volunteers oftener to assemble, would considerably assist their training, that the aid of officers and non-commissioned officers from the regulars would contribute to the same end; and advantage possibly be derived from the regulations for securing attendance in the first instance, and afterwards for enforcing orderly behaviour among those who should be made to attend, yet it must be remembered, that these benefits would not be obtained without a certain abatement, and that a part of the provisions in question, while they might improve the discipline, were likely to thin the numbers of the corps. This was a circumstance, which even the approvers of the present system must consider as a drawback: but by those who disapproved of that system, who have always considered it as mistaken and vicious, and as turning the zeal and energy of the country into a wrong channel, a further objection must be found in whatever tended (and was designed) to confirm that system, and to continue the volunteers in a course which they ought never to have taken. Much doubt might, therefore, be felt, whether the volunteer force would,

in reality, be increased by the provisions of this bill: in other words, whether what was represented as an improvement, was in truth an improvement or not? But admitting this to be the fact, there still came the two great and leading inquiries; 1st. how far the improvement of the volunteers was the best course to be pursued, with a view even to present danger, considering, that even for the moment this improvement would not be obtained, but by means prejudicial in other respects? And 2dly, how far what might be best for the moment, would be best upon the long run, and might not more than counterbalance what was gained in present safety, by the injury done to all our means of safety in future? It was singular enough, that in all this discussion about the improvement of the volunteers, no one should have remarked, that the main clause of the bill, that which was by far the most efficient and operative namely, that which gave the exemptions, was one, in which improvement was not at all concerned. A man was not a bit the better volunteer, was not in the smallest degree improved, either in his marching, or in the use of his musquet, in consequence of being exempted from the militia or army of reserve. The whole effect of this clause was not to improve, but to continue the volunteers; and in the question, therefore, of improvement, must be wholly laid out of consideration, though, in other views, it was the most important and powerful clause of all. It was of consequence that the House should keep distinctly in its view, that there were two descriptions of clauses in the bill: those, namely, which were meant for the improvement of the volunteer body, and those which were directed only to preserve and keep it together. The former might be called the *improving*, and the latter the *preservative* clauses. The latter had nothing to do with improvement, and could be considered as no addition to the bill in that respect: but the former had, on the contrary, something to do with the maintenance and preservation of the body, and, in fact, would be found to operate very forcibly against it. The powers given to the commanders of corps, the regulations for enforcing obedience, the additional days of attendance, all these would in themselves, and still more by the sort of confused apprehension which they would excite, operate, probably, in driving considerable numbers from the volunteer service,

and in counteracting the effect intended to be produced by the grant of exemptions. And so far hon. gent. might say, that he (Mr. W.) must approve of their operation, inasmuch as it would defeat in part the effect of a clause which was not inclined to approve. But in fact, when the matter came to be considered, it would be found that they would not be attended with even this advantage. Though they might thin the volunteers, they would not reduce the grievance complained of, which was, the injury done by the volunteer system to other services. The objection to the grant of exemptions was, not that it gave men to the volunteers, but that it withdrew them from services which were more important; and this evil would not be diminished, unless, contrary to what was likely to be the fact, the men whom these new regulations might cause to resign, were persons who had no exemptions but those which their volunteer service gave them. The reverse was rather to be expected, viz. that those persons would first give way, who had no need, for protection, of service in the volunteers, but had protections of another sort, either from age or number of children, or from their being already serving by substitute in some other species of force. These persons, might go, while the others remained; so that with less numbers in the volunteers, the number withdrawn from other services might continue just the same; and thus, all the evils consequent upon the present bill will be incurred, while the volunteer force, that force to which every thing was sacrificed, would really be less in numbers, and probably weaker altogether, than if none of these mischievous provisions had been introduced. — Here, therefore, if the facts were as he supposed, would be a good answer to one of the questions which he had adverted to, namely, whether even present security was well provided for by the measures now proposed! It was not very intelligible, how an immediate danger was to be provided against by a gradual improvement; how they were to guard against the dangers of the next three weeks, or next three months, by such a change as could be effected in the volunteers by the operation of the bill during that time. But when to this was to be added, the reduction of numbers which the bill might occasion,—a reduction not unlikely to operate faster in diminishing

the volunteer force, (meaning here by that expression, not the numbers, but the real effective result of the system), than the improved discipline would in increasing it; and (far more than all this) when they were to take into consideration the effects of this system, not future and distant, but instant and immediate. Upon all the other and better species of force, it did not seem too much to say, that from the present moment, as well as at all future ones, the country would be weaker in its general defence, in consequence of this bill, and of others which had preceded it, than if no such bills had ever been passed.—The greater part of the evils here complained of, which would begin to operate from the present moment, which would continue their operation through all succeeding ones, would be derivable partly from the condition respecting exemptions, which the present bill confirmed, and partly from what was now professed, and what might at all times have been expected, of the course likely to be pursued by the executive government. It was easy to foresee, and it had in fact been foreseen, that those who wished to make the volunteers permanent, and to give them their present shape and character, would adopt a course of proceeding with them, similar to that which had in part been declared.—The first circumstance that presented itself upon this occasion was, the odd idea of making the volunteer system permanent. It was very near a contradiction in terms. Zeal was, in its nature, a very transitory feeling; and accordingly the hon. gents. when they meant to prolong a system derived originally from that source, very prudently had recourse to motives more constant in their operation, and less likely to fail, than a mere effusion of zeal and patriotism excited by an opinion of present danger. The permanence of the system was to be entrusted to the good old steady principles of interest and fear, excited by bounties and advantages on the one hand, and penalties on the other. It was whimsical, indeed, to hear those who had vaunted so loudly the disinterestedness of these corps, who had branded as enemies to the volunteers every one who had hinted even a suspicion, that a view to exemptions could have had any influence upon their offers, now stating, that nothing but the hope of exemptions could hold them together, and that they would all fall to pieces the moment this principle

of coherence was withdrawn. Let it be remembered always, that this was the language of their friends. He had never said more, than that the prospect of exemptions had been a motive with many; as with many, it certainly had not. He could himself vindicate from any share in that motive, those with whom he had been more immediately connected, as they had been expressly told, that exemptions were what they were by no means to count upon. Testimonies to the same effect had been heard from every part of the House; and the fact was, indeed, notorious, that a great part of the volunteers, probably much the greater, had offered their services, either not thinking about exemptions, or being distinctly told that they were not to have them. It was curious, therefore, to hear it now stated, and by those who made themselves the peculiar guardians of the character of the volunteers, that exemptions, and exemptions only, would induce them to continue their services. He was inclined to doubt this statement, at least to the extent to which it was urged. It could hardly apply to those who had never had exemptions in view, and who, by possessing them hitherto, had enjoyed a *bonus* which they had not originally looked to: and if there were others, who, having been influenced by that motive, which he was far from meaning to blame them for, though it would take from their offer any claim to merit, might be disposed to withdraw, when their purpose in that respect was no longer answered, their number might not be greater than that of persons who would be led to quit the corps from the causes which he had before adverted to. Whatever the effect might be, it was plain that the purpose of these regulations was to continue the volunteer system at all events; not limiting its continuance by the motives which gave it birth, and which might be supposed commensurate with the causes that made it desirable; nor suffering it, whenever the time should come, to die a natural death, but giving to it a kind of forced existence, by means of motives which must equally operate, whether a force of that description was desirable or not.—This was the purpose; and therefore, in estimating the merits of this measure, they were to consider, not merely what its present effects would be, but what its operation at more distant periods. And in this view they must not overlook one

great head of danger, on which he had rarely dwelt, but to which he must not, on that account, be considered as insensible; namely, that which must arise from the existence of great bodies of armed men not subject to military law. Upon this point possibly, though upon this only, his opinions might vary, in some small degree, from those of an hon. gent. (his hon. friend as, he was sure, he would allow him to call him, and as he well might call him on subjects on which they so generally agreed, having commonly found it so difficult to forbear calling him so on subjects on which they completely differed), who, from the general turn and cast of his mind, might be less alive to eventual dangers of the sort which he was alluding to. He would so far agree with his hon. friend, as to admit that there was no danger of that sort at present. He was as much persuaded as any man, that whatever disaffection there was in the country (and they must never flatter themselves that it would be wholly extinct), was, for the present, confined within very narrow limits, and in a great measure absorbed and lost in the general care of providing against a danger which would make no distinction of friend or foe, but involve all in one common ruin. Of this disaffection, a less portion would necessarily be found among the volunteers, than among any other equal collection of people. Where there was so much zeal and loyalty, and patriotism, there could be little room for feelings of an opposite sort. But they must not suppose that this would be always so; there was in this institution, "nature, that in time would venom breed," though there might be "no teeth for the present." Evidences of this were perhaps already to be discerned. The volunteers, even in their present infant state, just new from the egg, had already shewn their strength, in obtaining a complete mastery over his Majesty's ministers. It was not the infant Hercules that was strangling the full-grown serpent, but the infant serpent that was subduing the full-grown strength of this Herculean ministry. His Majesty's ministers did not venture to stir a step upon this subject, without a previous consent obtained from the volunteers.—He could not but strongly reprobate the outcry which had been raised, and principally by the gent. of the Treasury bench, against all those who had freely delivered their opinions in condem-

nation of the volunteer system. Such an outcry, he had no hesitation in saying, was disgraceful to any man who contributed to raise it, and would be equally disgraceful to any man who suffered his conduct to be influenced by it; but it was evidently one of the characteristics of the present administration, that they had too much a view to that popular favour, which, unless under certain modifications and restrictions, should not operate upon the proceedings of government. They fancied, perhaps, that if they could succeed in exciting popular clamour against a member, they should restrain him from declaring opinions hostile to their measures; but they were excessively mistaken if they supposed, because that fear had so much effect upon themselves, that therefore it would have an equal effect upon the minds and conduct of others. He was told by a right hon. gent. (Mr. Hiley Addington) on a former night, that he was detested by the volunteers; he also heard it said, that it was dangerous for certain gentlemen to walk the streets, for the same reason. This might be intended as a joke rather than a serious warning; but it was a dangerous joke, and did not acquire much facetiousness from the manner of the persons, who uttered it.—He would not now dwell upon other instances of misconduct in the volunteers, particularly a memorable one, to which he had formerly adverted, namely, the riot at Chester. However little he might be disposed to call for any thing like vindictive vengeance in that case, or to look upon cases of that sort in general,

"As if the nation ne'er could thrive,

"Till every rioter were burnt alive,"

yet he must say, that it was a marked and shocking instance of that sort of subjection in which the government was to the volunteer body, and of subjection manifested in the way least to be endured, viz., by an unequal and partial distribution of criminal justice.—An immense objection, therefore, was on this score to be urged against any measure of which the tendency and object was to perpetuate the volunteer system; not to mention, at present, those other numerous objections which he had often had occasion to advert to: viz., the disturbance given, and the confusion introduced into all the relations and functions of civil life, and the fatal effect of weakening, and absolutely reducing to nothing, those distinctions which had hi-

thereto been appropriate to military men, and which, with the sentiments belonging to such men, they had hitherto been willing to accept in lieu of more solid advantages.—But he would confine himself at present to what related merely to defence; and to say upon this head that the volunteer system, with the exemptions granted to them, had no effect upon the supply of the other services was something so extravagant, that he could not understand how it could be seriously asserted. The exemptions, as was evident, operated in no less than four ways.—They, 1st, as was notorious, exhausted, in many instances, the very population of the parish or district from which the supply was to come. They, 2ndly, by being conferred principally on the young unmarried men, who were the first to enter into the volunteer corps, threw the ballot in a greater proportion on those who, when drawn, were the least likely to serve in person, and who, in consequence, in proportion to their numbers, would require a greater number of substitutes. Thirdly, while they thus increased the demand, they, by protecting men from the danger of the ballot, lessened the number of those who might be willing to engage as substitutes; and, lastly, when they did not absolutely produce the effect of preventing men from so engaging, they put them at least in a situation in which they could bargain to much greater advantage, and were not likely to engage but from the temptation of higher terms. In every one of these ways the exemptions had a direct and necessary tendency to increase the rate of bounty, and of consequence to bring it to that state, in which it actually was, and in which recruiting for the army could no longer go on. If an instance were wanting, he might take the army of reserve, which, in spite of all the whipping and spurring which had been applied, had come to what, in the language of sportsmen, was called a dead stand-still, at the distance of 14,000 men from its projected amount. There it was for the present, incapable of moving a step further. And though he would not pretend to say, that by the aid of a little nursing, with the help of a feed of corn, it might not again creep forward, yet he would venture to predict that it would never reach the place of its destination, would never produce the number for which it was calculated.—Even in this view alone, speaking of the system as a permanent

establishment, he could have no difficulty in saying, that the prejudice it would occasion, with respect merely to defence, was beyond comparison greater, than any advantages to be derived from it in the improved state of discipline and expertness in the volunteer corps. The great question, however, still remained; that which seemed in gentlemen's minds to put a stop to every other, viz., could the volunteer system, false and faulty as it might have been originally, be then abolished? Would not the suppression of exemptions instantly disband the corps? And could the country, in its present circumstances, afford to divest itself at once of such a vast portion of its force? Finally, could the suppression of exemptions be effected consistently with a perfect observance of good faith? He had little difficulty in saying that it could; provided always that no abridgment was made of the exemptions, which were granted for service already performed, or which was in a course of performing; and unquestionably no doubt could arise with respect to all who might enter into volunteer corps from that time forward. It was curious, indeed, to hear these talk with so much solicitude about preserving faith with the volunteers, who were at the moment taking such liberties with that faith, or rather committing so great a breach of it, in the very provisions which they were then proposing; there being nothing so clear, as that upon any principles of strict engagement, they had no right whatever to make those changes in the condition of volunteer service which was then proposed. If, then, good faith did not seem to stand in the way of the suppression of exemptions at a proper time, with respect to those even who were already enrolled; as unquestionably it did not with respect to those who might enter in future; there were, on the other hand, the strongest reasons for wishing to get rid of exemptions, not merely as injurious to the public interests, but as inconsistent with a principle not less to be regarded than good faith itself, namely, justice. Nothing could be more flagrantly unjust, nor more cruelly oppressive, than the power now possessed by individuals, or by self-created bodies of individuals, of imposing or withholding at their pleasure, a fine, such as that which attached to the ballot of the army of reserve, and of the militia. Let any one consider what that fine was, what its amount in itself, and what the effect

likely to be produced by it, in nine out of ten of the persons on whom it may fall, and then say, whether this was a power fit to be left to individuals or to committees, acting with respect to those whom they may protect from, or expose to this fine, with little other rule than their own mere discretion and option. The obligation upon the House to guard against the existence of such a power was greatly increased by considering the classes of persons upon whom it would be found principally to operate. These were the lower orders of journeymen and labourers, especially those who were married, and who with families so circumstanced as to make the burthen either of serving in person, or of providing a substitute more grievous and least possible for them to support, had yet not the specified number of children which would entitle them to an exemption. There could not be a class of people having more claim to the consideration and protection of the House, or whose rights and interests the House should be more jealous of appearing in any respect to abandon. Of all persons, those whose cause ought to be espoused with most zeal and anxiety, were the helpless and friendless; though these were, unhappily, the persons, who, in the general confusion of human affairs, and with the greatest infirmity of human nature, which too often lead men to press upon the weak rather than to resist the strong, were the most likely to be neglected and overlooked. It was not always that in public affairs, the greatest injustice was that which was least easy to be committed, or would excite the loudest complaints. Complaint seemed to be among those effects, in the producing which bodies are found to operate in proportion to their surfaces; whereas injustice was often greater the more it was confined and condensed, and the more partially it fell; so that it was commonly easier and safer to do a great injustice to a few, than a smaller one to many. The House, therefore, would, he hoped, be particularly anxious not to leave such a power, could it possibly be avoided as that which enabled persons, not only to withdraw themselves from a burthen which ought to be common to all but, what was far worse, to throw the burthen from their own shoulders upon those of others, and thus to double and treble and quintuple the load upon those who were least able to support even their own original share. Against any supposed

hardship of withdrawing the exemptions from the volunteers, he hoped the House would not fail to set in opposition, the extreme injustice, towards the classes which he had mentioned, of continuing them. Thus far as to the question of good faith, which might be supposed to stand as a plea in bar against any alteration to be made in the volunteer system, as applicable to those who were already engaged in it. Upon the effect which the withdrawing exemptions would have in dissolving the corps, he had already spoken, and would not do more, therefore, than repeat his opinion, that the reduction thus occasioned would very possibly not be greater, and would certainly be far less disadvantageous, than that which would be effected by the joint operation of the liberty of resignation, and the various vexatious regulations now introduced. But upon the whole of this question of the reduction or disbanding of the Volunteers, he wished to make one observation; namely, that to disband corps of volunteers was a very different operation, and would have a very different effect, from that of disbanding a part of a regular army. An army disbanded is dispersed in a way not to be re-assembled; but not so a corps of volunteers; which, though nominally dissolved, left all the parts precisely in the same situation in which they were. Not a man would be found removed from the spot on which he had all along been residing; nor would either his powers or his disposition be changed in any degree, at least in any material degree, from what they were when he belonged to the corps. Supposing, therefore, that the whole volunteer system were completely dissolved to-morrow; though a change would be made, no doubt, yet a change not at all of the sort which many were hastily led to suppose. Though there would be much less correspondence in the right hon. gent.'s office, fewer orders and counter-orders, less annoyance, less disturbance fewer disputes, less of the present evils, great and small, of the system, and though much would no doubt be lost in the progressive improvement in the common practice and training, yet the men would all remain, there would be the same bodies, the same limbs, and the same hearts, and, upon any alarm, the same disposition to run together again, either as some have supposed of the atoms at the last day into precisely the same shapes, or into new combinations

possibly not less advantageous. The House must not run away, therefore, with a notion, that to dissolve the volunteers, was utterly to deprive the country of all the benefit of that force in the same manner or to the same degree, as would happen in the reduction of any other military body. And this consideration would apply to that other head of inquiry; viz. the prudence or possibility of making any material change, with a danger impending such as that by which we were now threatened. It was said, our system may have been ill-conceived, our means ill-chosen, the posture into which we have thrown ourselves not the best calculated to give us the benefit of our strength; but what can now be done? To attempt to change our course of proceedings now, would be as dangerous as a general's attempting to change his positions at the moment when he was expecting an attack. — This argument he heard, he confessed, with great distrust, because it never failed to be urged from the beginning, and at periods when it was evident now that it was not true. It was the argument which had been in constant use to cover every thing that was wrong, and to make it impossible that an error once begun should ever be set right. We had been for ever in the state of a horse, who having got into a false gallop, was so pressed on by the injudiciousness of his rider, that he had never time to change and to set right again. We were acting upon the instructions sometimes ludicrously given to a foot messenger, "to make such haste, that if he should tumble down, he must not stay to get up again." But, in opposition to such maxims, he must say that on this, as on almost every other occasion, there must be a comparison of evils, and that it was not sufficient to say, there will be great mischief or danger in doing this or that, without taking into consideration, what would be the evil or danger of not so doing. He would accept the comparison of a general who had got into a bad position and was threatened with an attack, and admit the danger in such circumstances, of his attempting to make his position better; yet if he knew that he must be attacked in that position, and that, if attacked, he must to a certainty be beat, it might be necessary for him to attempt the change, with whatever danger it might be attended. A ship, in like manner, going before the wind, might be so pressed by the gale, that to tack would

hazard instant destruction; yet if destruction were inevitable by continuing her course, if there were a shore a-head that admitted of no escape, the attempt to tack must be made, whatever consequences must be apprehended. Such he felt to be the situation of this country. To continue the present system, with all the consequences which it was obvious would grow out of it, was little else than ruin. One of the consequences which it was plain was intended, was that of bringing the volunteer to meet the enemy in regular battle. It was a mistake exactly similar to this, which lost the country to William the Conqueror, at the battle of Hastings; a place that ought to be a warning to those who would now put their trust in so fallacious an idea. The case of La Vendee did not apply here. The Vendean gave up their country to be ravaged, and their villages to be burned: not as part of their system, but because they could not help it; when they had done so, they attempted a course, of which, he feared, we could not avail ourselves, in case of any disaster under the present system. He certainly allowed it was the best way to meet the enemy at once, and beat him. But this was like the receipt for running a race, to take the lead and keep it. The Vendean had never once assembled to fight as a regular army, except on one memorable occasion, when they met to march to Granville, to the number of 40, 50, or as some said, 80 thousand men, for the purpose of receiving the supplies of arms which they expected us to have brought them. It was on this occasion that the French armies took advantage to crush them, in such a manner as they never recovered, though they long sustained themselves with a noble energy. It was once considered whether they should again meet their enemies in regular battle; but it was considered by all the generals, that they would have much disadvantage in a regular conflict with troops so far superior to them in arms and discipline. They had again recourse to that warfare in which the enemy could not reach them, in which they were in the situation described by Macbeth,

"As easy may'st thou the intrenchant air
"With thy keen sword impress, as make me bleed."

By that system they still eluded the force of a power which subdued all Europe, and which did not subdue them till it had subdued all Europe.—He considered the

sort of discipline the volunteers would obtain a disadvantage. It brought to his recollection what Pope said of Curl's circumcision—the ceremony was interrupted, and he was left half circumcised, which, according to the Jewish law, was worse than not being circumcised at all. Whether this was good rabbinical doctrine or not, he did not know; but it was perfectly conformable to the common notions and language of mankind.

"A little learning is a dangerous thing."

had been observed the other night.—"*aut nunquam tenes aut perfee.*" was a maxim to the same effect. The system, in his opinion, ought to be entirely changed. The French National guards, so often cited as a justification for regarding the volunteers as regular troops, were employed at times in garrison towns, in escorting convoys, or perhaps murdering prisoners in cold blood; but they were not placed in the front of the battle, nor were ever employed against the enemy at all. These were the troops, however, to which alone, in their mode of formation and training, our volunteers bore any resemblance. Whereas the *Volunteers* of France, whom we, judging by the name, chose to conclude at once to be the troops corresponding to ours, were troops raised upon a quite different footing, who were instantly marched away from home the moment they were raised, and were never employed as troops against an enemy till they had been trained for at least eighteen months in every other species of military duty. This was particularly the case at Jemappe, where the battle was fought in November 1792, and the volunteers that fought there were those raised in the beginning of 1790.—The bill, in his opinion, might be considered as a new mutiny bill, printed on fine white satin. He ridiculed the measure in toto, and described it as having been formed in a smithery near Westminster-Hall, where every one was at work at it, and amongst the rest, the Attorney-General, hammering away and fetching it up with John Doe and Richard Roe assisting him. He was fully satisfied, that out of a barren moor like this, not one good crop could be got, and he was the more convinced of the folly of resorting to it, when such a rich and abundant field presented itself as the army. The right hon. gent. concluded with expressing his decided opposition to the whole of the system.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* began by observing, that, considering how often the subject had been discussed for the last three weeks, it was with extreme unwillingness he rose to comment on the speech which had been just delivered. The right hon. gent. (Mr. Windham) seemed to have compressed into his speech of this night the various remarks which, in the course of this session and the last, he had adduced against the volunteer system, with one exception only. The right hon. gent. wished his speech to be considered as a protest against measures, which he had stated as leading to consequences not short of absolute destruction. It would, however, be recollected by many, that the right hon. gent. had applied this description to a system, which, at the close of the last session, and during the debates upon the defence bill, he had pronounced to be that on which the House must rest for the protection and security of the country. After what he had heard from the right hon. gent., and comparing what he now said with what he had said, considering, too, that he had attacked the structure of the army, though it was the same as it had been during the whole time he was Sec. at War, he was not surprised at the course of argument he had thought proper to pursue, because he could not but recollect that the right hon. gent. who ridiculed the idea of a militia being an efficient force, was the same person who, when he was one of his Majesty's confidential servants, saw the militia extended to a much larger number than it was at the present moment. The House had heard a violent attack upon the volunteer system by a right hon. gent. during whose administration the system had originated, and who had extended it to 150,000 men. Under these circumstances, it was impossible not to have heard, without surprise, the objections the right hon. gent. had urged. He had attacked the system, because he thought it inefficient to repel the danger. He conceived it a weak substitute for that force the country had in its power to command. Now, was that the fact? Could the right hon. gent. make out the truth of his statement, that, by the adoption of the volunteer system, the regular force of the country had been neglected, or, on the contrary, that it had not increased beyond what it ever had been at any former period? Was it not true, that the regular force was greater in

G. Britain, than it had ever been? Was it not greater in Ireland, than even at the most critical periods of the last war? Was it not true, that though engaged in hostilities not more than 9 months, the whole regular force was within 15,000 men equal to the highest point during the last war. At the present moment, when the demands for the army were less, in consequence of its being less scattered over the face of the globe, and notwithstanding we had not been at war more than 9 months, though he admitted we began to arm from the instant of the King's message, we had a greater force in this country and in Ireland, than had ever been known. The right hon. gent. stated, that by the adoption of this system, we were meeting an immediate danger by a slow and gradual improvement of the discipline of the volunteers. In reply to this, he must beg gents. to recollect what was the intention of Parliament when the system was adopted last session. He must request the House to say, whether it was in contemplation, or within the scope of their hopes or expectations, that the volunteers of this country would have attained that degree of perfection and discipline to which they had happily arrived, within so very short a period as had elapsed since the passing of the act by which they had been constituted. Could it be called slow improvement in discipline, by those who formerly thought that exertions infinitely more limited than those the volunteers were now capable of, would be sufficient to avert the danger? When the bill for forming them was originally introduced, training on Sundays and 14 days, commuted afterwards for 24 days exercise, had been deemed sufficient to give to the country that degree of confidence and security which would lead it to look forward without apprehension to the issue of the arduous contest in which it was engaged. But what had taken place? Instead of 14 or 24 days exercise, the volunteers, with a zeal and enthusiasm worthy their spirits and the cause which animated them, had more than performed their contract. Instead of barely earning their exemptions, they had given the best possible contradiction to the imputation thrown out against them, of having been induced to come forward by the consideration of the exemptions. There was, he could state with confidence, hardly a volunteer corps in this kingdom that had not tripled its en-

gagement with the public; hardly one which had not, instead of 24 days exercise, devoted 3 or 4 times that period in the acquisition of military discipline. And what had been the effect? Not certainly that they had reached the degree of discipline which it was desirable they should possess, but that they had attained their present state of discipline with a degree of rapidity which neither the hopes nor expectations of the legislature could have anticipated at the time it defined the number of days' exercise required of them. The right hon. gent. had said, that he looked with the utmost apprehension to the proposition which had been suggested, that the volunteers were to be calculated upon as part of the means of resisting an invading enemy, or, in other words, that they were to be brought forward as an army. He had never heard it stated that the volunteers were to be brought forward as an army; but he had heard it said, and with rapture he had listened to so pleasing a theme, countenanced as it was by opinions far more worthy of reliance than any which proceeded from the right hon. gent., he had heard it said, that the volunteers were capable of being brought forward, not indeed as an army, but, under circumstances, as part of an army. He had the authority of high military characters to oppose to the opinions of the right hon. gent. Against his mere unsupported assertions, he had the sentiments of such men as Lord Cathcart, Earl Moira, and General Simcoe, entitling the country to count on the aid and co-operation of the volunteers with the regular force, as a material ingredient in our means of exertion for the defence against the enemy. The right hon. gent. had been pleased to traduce the discipline of the volunteers, and to speak with contempt of their inefficiency. In answer to this unjust aspersion, it was only necessary to state the opinion of one of the respectable officers he had named, Gen. Simcoe, a man he was proud to call his friend. That officer, without reference to any debates, but to convey that satisfaction to his mind which he was happy to say had been afforded by the knowledge of his opinion of the military efficiency of the volunteers corps, had transmitted to him an account of volunteers, consisting of 2,500 men, raised for the Southern part of Devon. He held in his hand the paper he had sent him, which was signed by the inspecting officer of the

corps of South Devon volunteers; they were composed of 5 battalions; and, with reference to every one of them, except the artillery, of which he spoke in the highest terms, he had used these words: "Fit for duty, and qualified to act with troops of the line." Of these 2,500 called out at different periods, only 123 had been absent, and their absence was accounted for by sickness. He trusted he might be allowed to observe, not for the purpose of depreciating any of our other military establishments, but to shew how far a spirit of loyalty and attachment to the country would carry men who were embarked in its defence, that these men, who had attended with such punctuality, were under no obligation of penalties; that they obeyed no impulse but of duty, zeal, and patriotism. The right hon. gent. had said, that experience had not justified the confidence expressed by some persons in troops of this description; and he had referred to the troops employed in La Vendée—to those men who had made one of the noblest efforts ever exhibited to Europe; men who, unfortunately with too little success, had resisted the revolutionary system of France, and had preserved their loyalty to their Sovereign. The right hon. gent. had stated, that these troops were a proof of the unsoundness of the principle of a volunteer system, and how little reliance was to be placed on any exertions, the result of it. He maintained, in opposition to his opinion, that they proved no such thing; on the contrary, they proved how little confidence was to be placed in that force the right hon. gent. wished to have in the room of the volunteers. The troops in La Vendée resembled an armed peasantry, more than any thing else. He was confident, the right hon. gent. and the House must know, that, in their march to Granville, they were zealous, brave, and loyal, but a tumultuous and undisciplined body, incapable of resisting a well-disciplined army. One of the errors of the right hon. gent. and his friends was, that they were desirous of substituting an armed peasantry; but they were not justified in saying that an armed peasantry was better than a volunteer force. For reasons unnecessary to be stated, it was thought expedient to give that preference to the volunteers they deserved; but still there remained to ministers a discretion to add an armed peasantry to the volunteer force. Let it not be said,

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then, that the volunteer system precluded an armed peasantry. The right hon. gent. had also said, that the national guards bore the strongest resemblance to volunteers; but with respect to the conduct of the national guards, there was nothing to warrant his apprehensions of the volunteers. Was he not aware of what was an incontestible fact, that both in La Vendée and at Jemappe, the national guards were employed. If they were employed at the battle of Jemappe, as he had reason to believe, surely no one would contend that they had not performed good service upon cause to which he should ever look with abhorrence. They had contributed to a victory fatal to Europe—a victory which every man who felt for the independence of Europe, must look back to with horror and regret. They had their share in producing that heavy calamity, but they shared also in the glory of the day. The right hon. gent. had heretofore lain particular stress on the exemptions: in reply to him he had stated, and it had been proved, that exemptions were not the original inducement to the volunteers. But, said the right hon. gent. let it appear it was not their motive now. It was one thing not to be actuated by an interested motive at first, and another, after a right had been conceded, not to wish to give it up. If they should now be deprived of their exemptions, they might feel that Parliament had broken its faith with them. That impression would be made which could not but have an influence on just and generous minds. The right hon. gent. seemed to assume, that every individual in a volunteer corps had the benefit of these exemptions, because he was a volunteer, and consequently that 400,000 men were exempted. He did not consider how many of these were exempted by age, by their occupations, by their services as constables, by their number of children, and various other reasons, from serving in the militia and army of reserve. It could be shewn, notwithstanding the supposed inquiry into the recruiting service, that at this time the actual amount of the army was much nearer the amount proposed to be raised, than at the corresponding period of the last war; and in fact, that more recruits had been raised for the regular army, than were raised in the first 7 years of the last war—a period when the right hon. gent. was exalting an administration that, much to its honour, was using every

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effort to enable the country to cope with the enemy. The right hon. gent. had said, that the effect of this system was to discountenance the regulars, tarnish their splendor, and throw them in the shade. It was not possible for 400,000, or twice 400,000 men, or any expedient that this country or any other country could adopt, to tarnish the glory of the regular army, or throw their merits in the shade. But, could any thing be so opprobrious, as to hold a language which might, in the minds of the regular army, cause an impression that their glory was tarnished, or that they were under-rated, because 400,000 of their fellow subjects were ready to co-operate with them, zealously and gloriously for their King and country. Was that an impression which any hon. gent. should wish to create? and yet it was impossible to hear his speech, without being satisfied it had such a tendency.—While the right hon. gent. had dwelt on the effects produced on the feelings of the regular army by those of zeal, which had done honour to the volunteers, he had referred, in a way which had given him great regret, to the irregularities of individuals. He believed it was a matter of exultation and astonishment, that the instances of irregularity had been so few. If he lamented there had been any irregularities, he at the same time rejoiced they had been so trifling, as to make it a subject of regret on the part of the House they had ever been noticed. The period when distractions and complaints among the volunteers were at their height, was in August last. What had produced them? It was, that the whole of their offers had not been accepted. True it was, there existed dissatisfactions, which, in some instances, were manifested by irregularities of expression; but it was only at the moment, when their loyal and patriotic feelings experienced a certain degree of mortification.—The right hon. gent. had not missed the present occasion of adverting to a topic he frequently alluded to, and had imputed to his Majesty's government, that they were actuated by base and unworthy motives, and of pursuing popularity at the expence of their public duty. That was a subject to which he adverted with great reluctance. Whether in a greater or less degree they possessed the confidence of the country, was not for him to conjecture. Sure he was they had served the country with zeal and fidelity. It was astonishing

that those ministers should be accused of courting popular favour, on whom the painful duty had been imposed of laying taxes on the people to the amount of 15,000,000*l.* They had performed their duty with regret, but without shrinking from it. He defied the right hon. gent. to produce an instance of any minister having so courted popularity. If his Majesty's ministers should have the good fortune to succeed in performing their duty to their country in other respects, he trusted they would obtain credit for their motives. In what they had done, he was persuaded the country would not impute to them that they had unlawfully and basely been pursuing popular favour. He begged pardon for having made these observations. They had been drawn from him by the comments of the right hon. gent. who on this, as on former occasions, unsuccessfully, but industriously, had addressed the House for the purpose of creating an impression that we ought not to place any reliance on that description of force, which, if not the object of reliance, could not act with effect at a time when, if the right hon. gent. was sincere in his idea of the danger that threatened us, no adequate force could be substituted. By the manner in which the right hon. gent. had dwelt on the exemptions, any one would be led to imagine they were created by this bill. In fact, all parts of the bill which related to exemptions, were qualifications and modifications of them. But the right hon. gent. meant to take this opportunity of expressing his disapprobation of the whole system, which, at the close of the last Session, he pronounced to be that on which the country must rely.—He should conclude, by maintaining, that the volunteer system was one on which the country must rely for its security, though in what degree he would not say. Thank God! we had a numerous and well disciplined army, a numerous and well disciplined militia, and 400,000 volunteers. Combining these together, he thought they constituted the most efficient force ever collected for the defence of this or any other country.

Mr. Fox said, that he should have supposed, from the speech of the right hon. gent. that he was not in the House when his right hon. friend spoke, for he had completely misrepresented all his arguments. He had never stated that all the volunteers had exemptions, nor had he

ever stated that the volunteers had enrolled themselves merely on account of the exemptions. On the contrary, he had mentioned several corps within his own knowledge that were enrolled before the exemptions were granted. It was therefore very hard to have arguments and sentiments attributed to gent. which they had never uttered. He and his right hon. friend had always argued, that the exemptions had not induced men to enter into volunteer corps, and therefore they had always opposed the granting of exemptions: and this was an answer to at least three-fourths of the right hon. gent.'s speech. The right hon. gent. had stated, that the national guard composed a part of Dumourier's army; of this fact he was not quite sure, but he knew that it was composed at first of raw troops, and the first report he sent of them was, that 20,000 of them ran away from 1,500 Austrians. It should also be recollected, that one of the first exploits of these raw French troops was to murder their own General (Dillon); and the next was, to make another of their generals (Biron), a prisoner. It was true, that these men turned out to be good troops after a campaign or two; but he only mentioned these cases, to shew the reliance that was to be placed upon raw troops. The only way of judging upon cases of this kind was to look into history, and he did not recollect a single instance in which raw troops had, in the first instance, been successfully opposed to veterans. The right hon. gent. had contended, that it was not the intention of government to substitute the volunteers for an armed peasantry, because the King had the power of calling out the population of the country; but had they taken the means to call them out? had they provided arms for them? or if they hourly expected the invasion, why were they not called out? It had been asserted that the volunteers had attained a greater degree of perfection than could have been expected; but he believed that near three-fourths of them had never fired with ball cartridge, and yet these men were raised to repel an attack that was expected in August last. The right hon. gent. had relied much upon the reports of some general officers, particularly Lord Cathcart, General Simcoe, and Lord Moira. With regard to Lord Cathcart, he believed he only spoke of the Irish volunteers, which were certainly, in some

respects, different from those of this country. With regard to the report of General Simcoe, no man could be disposed to pay greater respect to it than he was; but he should like to know what number of general officers had made similar reports: if there were no others, why then it might be inferred that was the only corps in such an advanced state of discipline. As to the opinion which had been said to be advanced by Lord Moira, it was one which he believed had been delivered at a public dinner; whether it had been correctly reported or not, he did not know, and therefore it was impossible to know whether his Lordship had really advanced such an opinion or not. It had been argued, that the volunteer system had not injured the recruiting for the army; but to this assertion he could give no credit: it was universally known, that the army had not been recruited as it might have been, and indeed it was impossible but that the number of exemptions given must materially affect the recruiting of the army; but it was contended that Parliament would be guilty of a breach of faith, if the volunteers were deprived of their exemptions: but it was not a breach of faith with the volunteers, when the number of days which they were obliged to drill, in order to obtain those exemptions, were changed from twenty to forty-four. The right hon. gent. had placed great reliance upon a comparison of the force in Great Britain now, and in the former war, but was the danger the same? was the whole force of France directed against this country? If it was not, it was absurd to revert to precedents in former wars. He still retained the opinion he had expressed of the advantage that would result from an armed peasantry, because, instead of 400,000 men, you would then have 2,000,000; but now, with the exception of the army, the militia, and the volunteers, there was not a man armed in the country. Before he sat down, he wished to ask ministers, whether they really expected the invasion, or they did not? If they did, he believed there never was an instance of a country left in such a state of defence, when such a powerful invasion was expected: if they did, he thought they ought immediately to set about some measures for its future security.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* wished to advert to a few points that had been taken notice of by the hon. gent. who had

just sat down. The opinion of Lord Moira, which he had formerly stated, he had received not confidentially, but merely from the public returns of the noble Lord. The opinion of General Simcoe he had given on the same grounds as stated in his return for the division which he commanded. The testimony of the persons to whom he had alluded were well known, and might be regarded as very good authorities for the opinion which he had supported of the efficiency of the volunteers.

Sir James Pulteney said, that when the General Defence Act had been first introduced in that House, he was the first, and he believed the only man, who strongly recommended the plan of employing an armed peasantry. He regretted that his idea had not been adopted, but the country was to make the best they could of the system as it stood. He would not agree with an hon. Colonel near him, as to the degree of discipline that was necessary in the volunteer corps. It had been pleasantly quoted, that

“A little learning is a dangerous thing.”

That certainly he could have no objection to, as a line from Pope; but the maxim was neither very convenient, nor very practicable, in the occurrences of private life. There were many avocations, in which he would rather employ persons who knew something of their trade, than those who were utterly unacquainted with the first principles of it. It was no easy matter to define what military discipline was; but if it consisted, according to his ideas, in knowing the use of a musquet, in being able to march with steadiness and precision, and in certain habits of obedience and regularity, inseparable from a military life, that degree of discipline he thought the volunteers capable of, and he was happy to find, that to a certain extent, they had attained it. Even that portion of discipline that could be acquired by a few persons assembling in a room, and learning at the word of command eyes right, and eyes left, would be attended with no little advantage; and if it should be ever found necessary to habituate the volunteers to a looser manner of spreading themselves over, or getting through, a country, they would not have much difficulty in adopting that mode of discipline. He fully agreed with the hon. Colonel, as to the extreme importance of the city of London; and he thought that

the volunteer force could render most service to the country, not by meeting the enemy on their first disembarkation, but by combating them in a desultory manner between the capital and the coast. He was not so sanguine in his expectations from the exertions of the 2,000,000 of armed peasantry. It was a fact well known to every military man, that in a battle only a certain number of troops could be employed, and if 50 or 60,000 French should effect a landing, even 100,000 volunteers, or armed peasantry, would be as useless as 2,000,000.

Colonel Craufurd explained, that he had always recommended that the armed peasantry should have some degree of training.

Mr. Dickinson spoke against the bill, and appealed to the Speaker, whether, in the course of his experience, he had ever known or heard of so incongruous and absurd a bill as the one before them. It had been compared, not unaptly, to a begging box, which was open to the contributions of the charitable and humane. It could not have presented more contradictory and inconsistent clauses, if the right hon. mover of it had thrown four or five blank sheets of paper on the table, and desired the members to scribble what they pleased on them.

Mr. Rose said, that there was no man who was a more warm, strong, and zealous friend to the volunteer system than he was. He had done every thing in that part of the country where he resided to encourage and promote it, and when difficulties had arisen in the arrangement, he informed those who referred to him, that those difficulties would be removed as soon as Parliament had taken the whole of the system under their consideration. He was sorry to find that was not the case, for he had never known so much pains bestowed to so little purpose. The bill now before the House went to paralyze all the good effects that were likely to result from a proper application of the principle of bounty. Instead of giving it to the volunteers, to expend it as they pleased, it was determined by the clause in this bill, that it should be applied—how? why to purchase great coats to shelter them, he supposed, from the heat of the dog-ds. He strongly objected to that clause which empowered farmers and manufacturers to make deductions from the wages of their servants, for the extra time they should

employ in drilling or exercising. The consequence of that regulation, he ventured to predict, would cause a very considerable diminution of the volunteer force, for that description of men would have no inducement to continue to be members. However, although he expected no good from the measure under its present form, yet he would not carry his opposition so far as to vote against the third reading of the bill.

Mr. *Curwen* said, he should have to trouble the House with but a few words. He entertained no doubts as to the public spirit and feeling of volunteers; but with respect to the degree of perfection in training and discipline, to which they, generally speaking, had arrived, he certainly had considerable doubts. The right hon. gent. had vaunted of the state of discipline which corps in a particular part of the kingdom, to the number of between 2 and 3,000 men, had arrived: but were all the returns of the inspecting officers to be laid before the House, a wide difference would soon be perceived, and the number of corps fit for duty, and to act with troops of the line, would, he believed, be found very inconsiderable.

General *Loftus* observed, that under the present circumstances of the country, he felt it his duty to give the bill his best support. He approved of the plan of blending the corps of volunteers with the regular army, which consisted of a given number of brigades, and placed under general officers acquainted with the service. He deprecated the idea of bringing the volunteers by themselves into action, of marching them into parts of the country to which they were totally strangers, or of placing general officers at the head of troops with whom they were entirely unacquainted. He had made these observations, not with the least view of throwing difficulties in the way, but in the way of caution; no idea could be rationally entertained of bringing the volunteers into the field, without any body to lead them. This he applied to the idea of employing the volunteers singly; if such were to be acted upon, experience would soon show its injurious effects. He next adverted to the important consideration of driving the cattle from those parts of the coasts where an enemy was likely to effect a landing. He recollected, when serving under the present Lord Howe, in America, that the enemy uniformly took the precaution of

driving the cattle from such parts of the coast as his debarkations were made; this operation threw his Majesty's forces into a distressing dilemma, and they were always forced to recur to their own magazines: the consequence was, that with all the skill and ability of that celebrated officer, he was unable to penetrate further than thirty or forty miles up the country. He was happy to understand that it was the intention of government to take the precaution of driving the cattle from the coasts, which necessarily must reduce the enemy to the alternative of subsisting upon the contents of their own magazines.

General *Tarleton* said, he should detain the House but for a very few minutes, and his endeavours would be to correct a misstatement which had frequently been made with regard to recruiting the army, and in which that night it had been asserted, we were wonderfully successful. The fact, however, he was sorry to say, was very different. In some districts, he knew, recruits were not to be had. A great deal of the statements which had been made on the contrary, were founded on the numbers who were drawn from the army of reserve, who were induced by a super-added and excessive premium to enter into the general service, and these they called recruits. There was a clause, he observed, in the Army of Reserve Act, allowing men of the height of five feet two, to enter as substitutes; the consequence of which was, that on a certain occasion, where upwards of 1,000 men had entered from the Army of Reserve, owing to the five-feet-two clause, there could not be found one man of five feet four for the general defence of the country. Therefore, if the data of these statements were taken from what was furnished by the army of reserve, it was a deception upon the House and the country. He then called the attention of the House to the favourable circumstances for ministers, under which the present war was commenced, with a parliament confiding beyond all former example, and with the spirit of patriotism and loyalty universally diffused throughout the country, they were furnished with men to render the force of the country completely invulnerable. But how far they were from improving these advantages, and establishing a complete and effective force in the country, was now pretty generally known. With respect to the measures intended to be proposed by an hon. Secretary for aug-

menting the troops of the line, when they came before the House he should deliver his sentiments upon them: but of this he was convinced in common with all officers who were conversant upon the subject; that the army ought to be augmented, and that much time had been lost.

Lord *Castlereagh* spoke shortly in explanation, and observed, that independent of the newly adopted modes of recruiting, when the number of men obtained by the ordinary mode, was compared with the amount obtained in the former year, it was only one-fourteenth less.

Mr. *C. Wynne* made some observations upon the defects, which, he contended, prevailed in the present volunteer system; the men, he said, could not learn the use of arms before they had arms given them. A comparatively small number were acquainted with ball-firing. He knew of two counties where not a single musket had been received, and other districts where not one half of the volunteers had been armed. He was glad the House were about to be rid of such a bill: it was going to a place whence he hoped it would not return, unless it was inoculated with a little more vigour and a little more efficacy.

Sir *W. Geary* made a few observations upon the subject, and contended, that the volunteer system could not be fairly held to interfere with the recruiting of the line, the diminution of which proceeded from the militia and the army of reserve.

Mr. *Henry Lascelles* expressed his wishes, that, if possible, a clause, which, in his opinion, threw open the doors to perpetual disputes, might either be entirely omitted, or so altered, as to prevent the bad consequences that would inevitably be produced by it; he alluded to that which authorised the deduction from the wages of farmers' servants, if they remained above four hours absent upon drill or exercise. He thought it advisable that the clause should be expunged from the bill, or that the time should be considerably extended. The question was then put on the third reading of the bill, and carried in the affirmative.—The bill was afterwards passed, and ordered to be carried to the Lords for their concurrence, by Mr. Tierney.—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday March 23.

[MINUTES.]—The royal assent was given by commission to seventeen pub-

lic and private bills: among the former were, the Exchequer Bills Bill, the Irish Revenue Bill, the Irish Countervailing Duties, the Irish Malt Duty, the Hides and Tallow Importation, the Sugar Warehousing, the Neutral Ships, the Rape Seed Oil Importation; and among the latter, *Boydell's Picture Lottery Bill*, the *Rochdale Canal Subscription*, and three *Naturalization Bills*. The Lords Commissioners were the Lord Chancellor, Lord Hawkesbury, and Lord Walsingham.—Lord Ashburton was sworn and took his seat on attaining his majority.—Counsel were heard in continuation, relative to the *Scotch Appeal, Fleming v. Abercromby*.—The *Volunteer Consolidation Bill* was brought up from the Commons by Mr. Tierney.

[VOLUNTEER CONSOLIDATION BILL.]—Lord *Hawkesbury* moved the first reading of the *Volunteer Consolidation Bill*; accordingly the title and brief of the bill was read by the Lord Chancellor.—The noble Secretary then moved, that the bill be printed for the use of their Lordships. He observed, at the same time, that the forms of the House did not allow the second reading of a bill, to be regularly moved until the prints were before the House. However, as there was every probability that the prints would be ready for delivery to-morrow, he should now give notice, that on Monday it was his intention to move for the second reading of the bill.

Earl *Spencer* rose, not, he said, for the purpose of opposing the measure, or to throw any difficulties in the way of his Majesty's government in the present circumstances, but merely to suggest to Ministers and to the House the consideration, whether a bill of the peculiar nature and importance as that, the heads of which had just been read, a measure, the principle of which was not only so very important, but in itself embracing such a variety of detailed provision, could be maturely considered so far as to make up their lordships' minds, as to that species of discussion required at a second reading, in the very short interval between the delivery of the bill and Monday next: he thought it could not. He deprecated the idea of any improper haste being used in the progress of the bill in that House. Their Lordships would recollect the extraordinary length of time it was under consideration in another place, the repeated dis-

cussions the measure had undergone, and the variety of amendments which had been made to it. It was therefore incumbent on their Lordships to give the measure a full and mature consideration in all its branches and details; the measure, in the present circumstances, was one of the greatest importance; the character and dignity of the House were implicated in the consideration; they should evince to the public their determination to give the measure a full consideration, and that no improper haste should be used on the part of their Lordships in passing the bill.— Under these impressions, he begged leave to suggest to the noble Secretary, that Tuesday should be the earliest day fixed upon for the second reading.

Lord *Hawkesbury* observed, it was by no means the wish of his Majesty's ministers to use any improper haste in the progress of the bill; on the contrary, it was their wish that the measure should undergo a full and thorough investigation. At the same time he could not avoid observing to the noble earl, that the detailed and repeated discussions the bill had already received, rendered its contents pretty well known to the public, and perhaps to a great number of their Lordships; however, though his wish was, that a measure of such peculiar importance in the present circumstances of the country, should receive as little delay as possible, under what had been suggested, he had no objection to take Tuesday as the day for his moving the second reading.

Earl *Fitzwilliam* made a few observations, principally in support of what fell from the noble earl near him (Spencer); he urged the propriety of giving the bill a full and mature consideration in that House. He adverted to the deliberate discussions it had undergone in the other House of Parliament, and the many alterations and amendments it had been found necessary to make in the measure as originally proposed to that House.

Earl *Darnley* expressed his coincidence in a great deal of what fell from the noble earls on his side of the House: but at the same time he must avow his opinion, that in the present circumstances of the country, the bill should be delayed as little as possible in its progress. No lord could more highly estimate the character and dignity of that House than himself: there were certain regulations in the bill which it would be expedient to carry into effect as

soon as possible. He was however an advocate for a full and thorough discussion of the measure; on that ground he had no objection to the proposed delay; but if he thought there was a probability of their Lordships being able adequately to discuss the measure previous to the intended recess, he should have no objection to the day first named by the noble Secretary of State.

Lord *Hawkesbury*, in explanation, assured the noble lords there was no intention on the part of ministers to hurry the progress of the measure. He was equally aware of the various and complicated nature of the measure, as of its peculiar importance; it certainly embraced many detailed considerations, each of which involved a principle in itself; it was then right that the whole should be fully and maturely considered, and if such could not be done previous to the recess, they had no particular desire to urge its passing before that period.

Lord *Harrowby* made a variety of observations, not only on the bill itself, but on a great part of the conduct of his Majesty's ministers relative thereto. In one point of view, it was his wish that the bill should receive the sanction of the legislature as speedily as possible, as it contained, in particular, one provision of which he approved, namely, that which held out a bounty for the encouragement of volunteers to perfect themselves in military discipline and exercise. This part of the bill, when he considered the critical circumstances, with respect to pending invasion, in order to be of real service, should be carried into effect as speedily as possible, for on a short approaching interval much may depend. The noble lord then adverted to the delays which he conceived ministers had suffered to take place with respect to the measure in question, and censured their conduct on that head. Much time had been lost. This was the only measure they brought forward for the defence of the country, and as little time should be lost as possible. He deprecated the idea of losing any time in consideration of a recess, but if such a proceeding was resolved upon, he hoped it would be for the shortest period possible, not extending beyond the Monday, which would follow the second reading of the bill. His Lordship then alluded to some parts of the bill, which, from their questionable nature, as well as on account of the conduct of

ministers in these respects, he deemed to require mature consideration and thorough investigation on the part of their Lordships.

The Earl of *Carnarvon* warmly deprecated every idea of hurrying the progress of a bill of such importance as the present through the House: an attempt of the kind militated against the letter and spirit of certain standing orders. He knew there were certain precedents for speedily pushing bills through the House, but he hoped they would not be acted upon; it was the duty of the House fully and maturely to consider and investigate the measure. He fully agreed in what had been stated by a noble earl of the nature of the bill; it was one of an intricate kind, and should not be hastily proceeded with: its effects on, and connexion with other measures proposed by ministers in the last session, should be also considered, as well as the length of time which they suffered to elapse before they came forward with the bill in question. The noble earl, after animadverting on the conduct of ministers in these respects, contended for the propriety of discussing the measure in the most cautious and deliberate manner.

The *Lord Chancellor* quitted the woolsack, and delivered his sentiments upon the occasion. He adverted to the irregular turn which the debate had taken, but which to observe upon, as he then felt it proper, he must necessarily fall into the same irregularity himself. The question he conceived was, whether the bill should be read a second time on Tuesday; and in considering this, the noble and learned lord commented on what had fallen from a noble earl then near him, and from a noble lord who had spoken rather at length on the opposite side of the House: the inconsistency of whose arguments, as operating either in favour of delay, or on the contrary, for expedition, were pointedly remarked upon by his Lordship.—With his noble friend he agreed in the propriety of maturely and deliberately considering the measure before them; it was irregular in point of form, as well as an erroneous way of considering the case, to go upon an assumption of what the House in its wisdom may resolve upon with respect to the ensuing period of recess. He seemed to think the latter day mentioned, the preferable of the two, as, in common with several of their Lordships, he knew but very little of the detailed provisions of

the bill, save from that description of them which his duty on the occasion of the first reading of the bill rendered it necessary he should read to the House; and he was fully convinced of the propriety of duly and thoroughly discussing the measure in question.

Earl *Darnley* spoke in explanation, and Lord Minto seemed inclined to speak, when

Lord *Walsingham* deemed it incumbent on him to remind their Lordships of the obvious irregularity of the present discussion. There was, strictly speaking, no question before the House, as in point of form, the second reading of the bill could not regularly be moved for, until the prints were before their Lordships.—The correctness of this remark was acknowledged by the Lord Chancellor; and Lord *Hawkesbury*, in the course of a short explanation as to the point of form, reminded their Lordships, that what the Noble Lord had observed, had been conceived by him in the first instance. He then observed that it was his intention to move for the second reading of the bill, on Tuesday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, March 23.

[MINUTES.]—The House having, pursuant to summons, proceeded to the House of Lords, the Speaker on their return stated, that the royal assent had been given by commission, to the *Exchequer Bills Bill*, the *Irish Duties Bill*, the *Irish Countervailing Duties Bill*, the *Irish Malt Bill*, *Boydell's Lottery Bill*, and the *Port of London Bill*.—Mr. Vansittart presented “An Account of the ordinary Revenues and Extraordinary Resources constituting the Public Income of Great Britain, for the year ending the 5th Jan. 1804,” which was ordered to lie on the table, and to be printed.—Mr. Irving, Inspector-General of Imports and Exports, presented, “An Account of the Value of all Imports into, and Exports from, Great Britain, for 18 years, ending 5th Jan. 1804,” which were ordered to lie on the table and to be printed.—Mr. Kemp, from the Commissioners of Excise presented, “An Account of the Produce of the Permanent Taxes imposed in the years 1802 and 3, during the years ending 5th Jan. 1803, and 5th Jan. 1804, distinguishing each quarter, so far as relates to the Revenue of Excise in

England," which was ordered to lie on the table, and to be printed.—The Inn-keepers' Allowance Bill was read a third time and passed.—The House having considered, in a committee, the Act of the 42d of the King, respecting the regulation of the linen manufacture, the Chairman obtained leave to bring in a bill to amend so much of the said act as relates to the Irish linen manufacture, particularly with respect to flax-seed.—Mr. Porter, from the Commissioners of the Customs, presented, "An Account of the Balances and Arrears due from the Collectors of the Customs in England on the 5th of Jan. 1804, as far as the same can be made out," which was ordered to lie on the table and to be printed.—The report of the Irish Militia Families Bill was brought up.

[**LORD HOOD'S CLAIM.**].—The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that a copy of the proceedings of the Privy Council, respecting the ships captured at Toulon, in the course of the last war, had been some time lying on the table of the House, and he gave notice of his intention of moving in the Committee of Supply on Monday next, for a grant of a sum to carry into effect the recommendation of the Lords of the Treasury, in order that the sum should be distributed among the captors of those prizes.—The right hon. gent. afterwards rose again, and observed that finding he was mistaken in supposing the report of the proceedings of the Privy Council respecting the captures at Toulon, to which he had before alluded, was printed, said, he should propose the printing of this document; and, in order to give time to the House to examine it, should withdraw his notice for Monday, and defer until Wednesday the motion in the Committee of Supply.

Mr. *Johnstone* thought this a subject of so much importance, and one so likely to give rise to considerable difference of opinion, that the proposed motion of the right hon. gent. ought to be postponed till after the recess, in order to give time for consideration, and that the discussion and attendance should be full and satisfactory.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* stated, that from the nature of this business, all unnecessary delay should be avoided; and he was certain, that did the hon. member know the extreme anxiety felt by the seamen and others interested in the subject, he would himself be among the first to press that it should be decided on as soon as possible.

Mr. *Rose* was not aware, before this day, that any such papers as those alluded to by the right hon. gent. who had just sat down, were on the table of the House; nor was he either that any such claim had ever been preferred by those engaged in taking ships, &c. at Toulon, although he was long in office after that event. The subject appeared to him to be of much importance, and he was therefore inclined to agree with the proposition for farther time to consider it than the right hon. gent. had mentioned.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* stated, in proof of the urgency of the case, and the propriety of expedition, that many of the persons interested in the discussion only waited the result, to set off for different stations in the service of their country. If, however, it should appear that the attendance should be thin on Wednesday, and that the proposition was not, therefore, likely to receive an ample discussion, he certainly should comply with the wish expressed, for putting it off till after the holidays.—After a few words from Mr. *Rose* and Mr. *G. Vansittart*, the conversation dropped.

[**IRISH HALF-PAY OFFICERS.**].—Lord *A. Hamilton* rose, pursuant to notice, to move for the production of a "Copy of any orders which may have been issued by the Lords of his Majesty's treasury in Ireland since the union, affecting the half pay of officers on the Irish establishment, when employed in England."—The noble Lord stated his object to be, to ascertain whether the indulgence of paying the revenues of the civil officers of the Irish government in this country at par, was extended to any other persons, and particularly whether the meritorious persons who were the subjects of his motion experienced this mark of favour.

Mr. *Corry* said, he was not aware of the existence of any order such as the noble Lord alluded to, but yet he had no objection to the motion, nor to answer any question which might be put by the noble Lord, or any other member, in order to put the House in possession of full and satisfactory information with respect to the affairs of Ireland.—The motion was agreed to.

[**PROPERTY TAX ACT.**].—Mr. *Vansittart* moved for leave to bring in a bill to repeal so much of the Property Tax Act, as requires attornies, agents, and factors, to

retain and pay the duties chargeable upon public annuities.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* stated, that this measure was proposed in consequence of a wish expressed by the bankers, and other persons interested, and from a full persuasion of the justice of their request. Leave was given; the bill was afterwards brought in by Mr. Vansittart, read a first and second time, and committed for Monday.

[*LOYALTY LOAN.*]—Mr. *Dent*, in advertising to this subject, observed, that an opinion had been given by a professional man, different from those of the Attorney and Solicitor General. The subject was of very considerable importance, as it involved a capital of 20,250,000*l.* and if the period of payment was to be deferred till April 1805, and any event, such as a peace, should take place, causing a great rise in the price of the funds, a very material consideration would arise out of it, as the loyalty loan could not then rise above par. It was important that the question respecting the time of payment should be settled, as he understood that several holders of the loan, to the amount of upwards of 2,000,000*l.* had given notice that they expected to be paid on the 10th of April next.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that the subject divided itself into two heads: the first a question of law, and the next of equity. With respect to the question of law, the law officers of the crown had given an opinion different to that supported by the hon. gent. As to the question of equity, whilst he agreed in the importance of the subject, he should certainly pay every attention to it, and endeavour to bring the point, respecting which difficulties had arisen, to a decision as soon as possible.

Mr. *Dent* observed, that something should be done before the 10th day of April next.

[*AYLESBURY ELECTION.*]—The report of the committee on the Aylesbury election was taken into consideration. The first resolution, charging Mr. Bent with bribery, was agreed to. The second, relative to the system of corruption, was left open to the House to found any measure upon. Upon coming to the resolution in which the name of John Rawbone is inserted among those implicated in the charge of bribery.

The Marquis of *Titchfield* rose, and

stating his opinion that sufficient proof did not appear to sustain the charge against this man, he moved that his name should be omitted.

Mr. *C. Wynne* said, that he was a member of the committee appointed to try this case, in which it appeared that John Rawbone was present at a table, when another person received a bribe, and this in consequence of a previous invitation. The committee, therefore, felt it their duty to report his name, leaving it to the House to decide whether his presence upon the occasion alluded to should be considered an assent to the act, and a participation of the guilt.

The *Master of the Rolls* thought that it would be extremely wrong, upon the grounds stated by the hon. Member, to institute any such prosecution against the subject of this motion, as that which took place in the Ilchester case.—The motion was agreed to.

Sir *G. Cornwall* rose, agreeably to notice, to move for leave to bring in a bill to prevent bribery and corruption in the election of representatives for the borough of Aylesbury. The hon. Baronet observed upon the scandalous system of corruption which prevailed at Aylesbury during the last election. A number of the voters not being satisfied with two candidates, deputed some of their body to search for a third, whom they found out, and from whom they received a certain sum of money, as a reward for their support at the election. This had appeared in evidence before the committee, and he, as their chairman, had been appointed by the almost unanimous voice of the members, not to move for the disqualification of the voters concerned in the bribery, nor for their prosecution, but to move for leave to bring in a bill for preventing bribery and corruption in the election of members to serve in Parliament for the borough of Aylesbury.

The Marquis of *Titchfield* conceived the object of the bill to be to throw open the borough, and as such he highly disapproved of it. He had no objection to any proceeding against the guilty persons, but he trusted that Parliament would never consent to infringe the right of above 300 electors for this borough, merely upon the ground that, according to the report of the committee, of which the hon. Baronet was chairman, 50 voters had been implicated in bribery. He hoped that no such

attempt at disqualification would ever be countenanced in that House; and feeling that the idea ought not to be entertained, he should vote against the motion.

Mr. *C. Wynne* begged to set his noble friend right, as the corruption was much more extensive than he had stated: for although the names of only 50 persons were mentioned, not less than 200 electors were proved to have accepted bribes. This case was, indeed, so distinguished for open profligacy, that he had never heard of any thing at all like it. It was as unblushing as if the bellman had been sent round the town to offer a bribe to any elector that would accept it; and those bribes were proved to have been distributed by the supporters of each of the contending parties. He did not, therefore, conceive that any grounds could exist to render it more strongly incumbent on the legislature to interpose.

Mr. *Rose* said, that from the depositions of *Wilson*, a man who was very well disposed to evade the facts, as the House was aware, it appeared that above 200 of the electors of this borough had accepted bribes; that they were all collected in a room, on the table of which there was at one end a bowl of punch, and at the other a bowl of guineas, from which each man had his *douceur*; that of the 270 who supported Mr. *Bent*, only 50 votes were free votes. This was evidence sufficient to convict those men before a jury; and, with such evidence before gent. could they, he would ask, consistently with their own character, or, indeed, with common decency, consent to reject a bill which had for its object to prevent the recurrence of similar corruption.

Sir *John Newport* stated, that the letter of invitation to the third candidate was signed by 200 electors, each of whom co-venanted for, and received his bribe. It was the custom among the electors of this borough, to demand Christmas boxes of their representatives, and, to enforce the payment of them, they say that they shall always have a third candidate at the election, in order to enhance their own value. They had become discontented with the old candidates at the last election, and they contrived to find a third, of whom they made use to plunder the other two and himself also. It appeared, that in addition to the other guilt proved against those gent. of Aylesbury, that many of them went to each of the opposing parties,

and promised their support. As they could not vote for more than two candidates, they of course meant to trick the third. When the third candidate arrived at Aylesbury pursuant to an invitation already referred to, his carriage was dragged through the town, and at the house he stopped, all the voters inclined to sell their support to him were assembled, none being admitted but persons qualified to vote, and each received two guineas. The hon. Baronet after commenting upon the turpitude of such conduct, observed that in his judgment the House should be happy to avail itself of such cases to throw open those boroughs, and thus to advance towards that pure representation of the people, which some gent. had proposed to attain by other means that were not consonant with the free spirit of our constitution. This appeared to him to be the method by which Parliament might purify the representation of the people in that House; and he declared, therefore, that he never gave a vote with more sincere satisfaction than that he felt in supporting the motion under discussion.

Mr. *Nicholas Calvert* approved of the motion, as he considered this to be one of those jobbing boroughs all of which he should be happy to see thrown open. There any man who had a few thousands to spend, might, however unknown to, or unconnected with the place, or however exceptionable in character, contrive by a judicious application of that sum, to obtain his election. In such boroughs, from what he heard, he was disposed to believe, that there was generally an understanding between the partizans of the old and new candidates, the policy of both of whom it always was, and for obvious reasons, to create a contest. The only practicable way, as it struck him, of removing such scandalous artifices, was by opening these boroughs.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that it was enough for him to know that gross bribery had been committed in the borough of Aylesbury; that a select committee had, upon grave investigation, decided that such was the case, and had in consequence reported such proceedings to the House. He must think it incumbent upon him to vote in support of a measure in the first instance, which purported to go to the prevention of a repetition of such practices. But he did not mean it to be understood, that by such vote he held

himself pledged to the support of this or that measure; on the contrary, he positively and unequivocally declared, that he did not bind himself to any thing more than the support of a bill with a title such as the present, reserving to himself to express his opinion, whatever it might be, without any restraint whatever, in an ulterior stage of the business. Indeed, he confessed that there was some degree of doubt upon his mind with respect to the present case, as Robert Dupree, Esq, the sitting member, had a charge laid against him, which was different in the case of the Cricklade and Shoreham elections. With the resolutions before them which the House had received he thought that they must see the propriety of admitting the bill which was then proposed.

Mr. *Hurst* declared in the most distinct terms, that he thought it becoming the dignity of the House that they should adopt some measure for the assertion of its own rights, and for the preservation of the freedom of election, in an instance where they were so flagrantly violated. But he could not, at the same time, refrain from expressing his disapprobation of a principle which had been laid down in the speech of the hon. gent. who said that the number of corrupt voters was not necessary to be looked to, for that he thought it was sufficient that the existence of bribery within the borough was proved in order to make him see the necessity of adopting a parliamentary regulation, to prevent the recurrence of such a case hereafter. Now he was of opinion that the bribery or corruption of any small portion of the inhabitants of any place, could by no means warrant the House in taking upon them to interfere with the manner of voting within that district. In the present case it was manifest that a regular system of corruption had been adopted and acted upon to a very great extent. It was, therefore, an act which the House owed to itself and to the constitution, to receive a bill for the future regulation of elections in such a place, at least so far as to prevent a repetition of such disgraceful practices. As to the internal merits of the bill, how far its contents went to prevent the evil complained of, or whether it might not go too far, he did not mean to inquire in the present stage of the business, but should declare his sentiments unfettered by any pledge or promise, at a future period, in the same manner as the right hon. the

Chancellor of the Exchequer had declared that it was his intention to do. The cases of the Shoreham and the Cricklade elections he thought by no means similar to the present.

The *Master of the Rolls* expressed himself glad that no steps were suggested to be taken by the House to prosecute the individuals implicated, as he should consider such a measure inexpedient. By agreeing to the introduction of the bill, he did not pledge himself as to its principle; respecting which he should reserve himself for the second reading.

Mr. *C. Wynne* adverted to the cases of Cricklade and Shoreham, where he said the elections had been conducted with the greatest purity, since those boroughs had been thrown open.

Sir *R. Buxton* observed, that at the time when the Attorney General was instructed to proceed in the case of the borough of Cricklade, it was one of the most corrupt within the kingdom; since it had been made an open borough, it was as free and pure as any county in Great Britain. He was no friend to innovation, but he believed that if the House was to take into its consideration to amend the state of the borough representation throughout the kingdom it would contribute much to the honour of the House and the stability of our system.—The question was put, and leave granted to bring in the bill.

Sir *G. Cornwall* moved that a new writ should not be issued for the election of a member for the borough of Aylesbury until the 27th of April.—Ordered.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday March 26.

[MINUTES.]—Counsel was heard relative to the cross appeal, *F. Abercromby v. Fleming*, viz. Mr. Alexander, at some length, on the part of the appellant. The further consideration of the case was adjourned till Wednesday.—Three private bills were received from the Commons, and severally read a first time.—Mr. Bishop presented certain accounts from the London flour and meal company, directed annually to be laid before Parliament.—Mr. Irving, from the Inspector General of the Imports and Exports Office, presented sundry accounts from that department.—Mr. Stavelly, from the General Post Office, presented an account of the arrears due from certain offices of that department

on the 5th of January, 1804; and also an account of the balances in hand from the month of October, 1803, to January last. —These documents were severally ordered to lie on the table.

[*IRISH MILITIA.*] — Lord *Hawkesbury* presented a message from the King relative to the tender of the Irish militia regiments to serve in any part of Great Britain, similar to that delivered to the Commons. The message being read, his Lordship moved, that the same be taken into consideration on Wednesday next, and their Lordships summoned for that day.

The Earl of *Limerick* rose, not by any means to oppose the motion of the noble Secretary of State, but to express his most cordial approbation of the circumstances which gave rise to such an auspicious communication from the throne. He had to congratulate the inhabitants of both parts of the United Kingdom upon the occasion; his countrymen, upon their coming forward in a manner so truly patriotic, and which redounded so greatly to their honour, and offering to identify their interests and their fate upon such an occasion as the present, and the inhabitants of Great Britain upon such an important accession to the active and efficient force of their country. He felt assured, that in cases of the like necessity, the militia of Great Britain would freely come forward, and volunteer their services to any part of Ireland. He regarded this event as a most favourable opening, and which, he trusted, would lead to further interchanges and co-operations of the respective forces of both parts of the United Kingdom.

Lord *Carleton* made a few observations to the same general effect as those which fell from the noble Earl.—The question was then put, and the motions of the noble Secretary of State ordered accordingly.

[*VOLUNTEER CONSOLIDATION BILL.*]

Lord *Hawkesbury* moved, that the Volunteer Consolidation Bill be read a second time to-morrow.—Ordered.

Lord *Grenville* said, that he had several motions connected with this measure to submit to the House, but which he trusted would meet with no opposition. His motions were, for copies of the circular letters issued by the Secretary of State, on the subject of volunteer corps. 2dly, for the number of volunteer corps who had waived their right to exemptions. 3dly, for

the number of volunteer corps, whose offers of service had not been extended to the whole of Gt. Britain, distinguishing the places to which such service was limited.

Lord *Hawkesbury* signified, that he had no objection to the noble Lord's motions. —The questions were then put, and the motions severally agreed to.

Earl *Spencer* made a few observations relative to the future progress of the volunteer bill. He called the attention of the House to the great variety of important clauses and provisions which the bill contained. He did not think it probable the measure could be thoroughly discussed in a committee before the recess; he was therefore of opinion, that the detailed discussion of the bill should be postponed until after that period. He adverted to the circumstances of the very important information which was necessary to the due elucidation of the measure just moved for by his noble friend (Lord *Grenville*), which most probably could not be presented early enough for that part of the discussion, supposing it to come on before the recess. Upon the whole, the noble Earl seemed to think, that as there was no probability of the bill's getting through the committee before the recess, it would be preferable to postpone it, as a partial discussion of the measure before that period, in a committee, would rather be a disadvantage than of a beneficial tendency.

Lord *Hawkesbury* observed, it was his wish that the bill should go through a committee. As to the probable length of the discussion in that stage of the bill, he could not venture an opinion, as he could not tell what clauses or provisions any noble Lord might have to propose, or what objections may be offered to the existing regulations of the bill; but if he found that it was not possible, or very improbable, that their Lordships could get through with that stage of the bill fully before the recess, he should be rather inclined not to propose it, as he agreed with the noble Earl in deeming, that in such a case the proceeding would be rather disadvantageous than otherwise.

[*IRISH SALARIES AT PAR.*] — The Earl of *Limerick* moved for the production of an account of all sums, &c. paid at par, to persons in and from Ireland, on the part of the government thereof, since the Union, and distinguishing the sums so paid, in the present session of Parliament, with an account of the

average of exchange during that period, together with a statement of the orders from the government of Ireland, under which such sums were paid, &c.

Lord King expressed his wish to amend the noble Earl's motion, by the addition of "account of all sums paid in specie in Dublin, to the same, if any were so paid." This was shortly objected to by the Earl of Limerick, on the score of irregularity, and as it may form ground to the noble Lord for a separate discussion.—And after a few words in explanation between these Peers, Lord King declined pressing the amendment.—The question was then put upon the Earl of Limerick's motion, which was ordered accordingly.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, March 26.

[MINUTES.]—The bill for increasing the capital Stock of the Governor and Company of the Bank of Scotland, was read a third time, and passed.—Sir G. Cornewall brought in a bill for the prevention of Bribery in the Borough of Aylesbury, and making several regulations respecting Elections in that Borough in future. Read a first, and ordered to be read a second time on Monday, the 16th of April next.—Sir John Newport stated, that he had moved for the production of certain public accounts on the 2nd of Feb. last. These accounts had not yet been presented, and he therefore renewed his motion, "That there be forthwith laid before the House accounts of any and what sums that have been raised by Grand Juries and paid into the hands of the Treasurers of Counties, Counties of Cities or Towns in Ireland, towards the support of Houses of Industry in the years 1801, 2, and 3, respectively." Ordered.—A person from the General Post Office presented Accounts of the amount of Money received by the different Postmasters within the last year, and the balance now remaining in their hands. Ordered to be printed.—The annual accounts of the London Flour Company were presented, and ordered to lie on the table.—An account of the Distribution of Two Million Pounds sterling, which was voted in the last session towards the service of the year, was presented, and ordered to lie on the table.—A Petition was presented from certain inhabitants of the Borough of Chippenham, stating that a Select Committee had decided on the case of

the late contested Election for that Borough, on principles which they with deference conceived to be materially different from the ancient usage of that Borough, and praying that they might be heard by their Counsel on that head. The petition was ordered to be taken into consideration on Tuesday, the 8th of May.—Mr. Dent gave notice, that he would, after the recess, move, that the House take into its consideration the situation of the Holders of Loyalty Loan Debentures.—The order of the day being read for going into a Committee on the Irish Militia Families' Bill, a short conversation ensued between Mr. Foster and Mr. Corry, respecting the allowances to be made to the families of the militia-men, after which, the Bill went through the Committee, and the report was ordered to be received to-morrow.—Mr. Kinnaird having adverted shortly to the paper, containing the account of the Distribution of Grants for the year 1803, moved, "That there be laid before the House an account of the sums at present remaining in the Exchequer, and the sums to be raised, distinguishing the different heads." Agreed to.—Mr. Corry moved, "That there be laid before the House, an account of all Salaries and Pensions on the Irish Establishment, paid at par in England, from Jan. 1803 to Jan. 1804, which account was afterwards presented, and ordered to be printed.

[BANKERS' INDEMNITY BILL.]—On the order being read for the House resolving itself into a Committee on the Bankers' Indemnity bill,

Mr. *Vansittart* moved, that it be an instruction to the Committee that they make a provision to extend the time of hearing appeals on surcharges made under the Property Tax.

Mr. *Princep* objected to the whole principle of the bill. He was of opinion, that many innocent persons would suffer by the passing of such a law, as they would not be able to make their returns within the proper time in many instances, where they resided at a distance in the country. It would be more regular for the agent, when he got his dividend warrant, to go into another office, pay the assessment, and obtain a certificate accordingly. If the principals had any claim to exemptions, they should prefer such claim themselves.

Mr. *Dent* observed, that the bill only went to the prevention of an evil, which it never was the intention of government that

the parties should suffer. If the measure was not adopted, the greatest inconvenience would ensue in transacting the business in the manner which the hon. member had described. He then asked the right hon. the Secretary of State if any other alteration was not intended to be made after the holidays.

Mr. *Vansittart* declared, that he was not at present aware of any such measure being in the contemplation of his Majesty's ministers. If, however, any sufficient ground was stated, some other regulation might be adopted in the course of the session.—The bill was then passed through the Committee, the report received, and the bill ordered to be read a third time to-morrow.

[*KING'S MESSAGE.*]—The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* placed himself at the bar of the House, and presented the following message from his Majesty, viz “*G.R.* His Majesty thinks proper to acquaint the House of Commons, that the officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates of the several regiments of the Militia of Ireland have made a voluntary tender of their services to be employed in Great Britain, during the war, his Majesty has received with great satisfaction this striking proof of their affection and attachment toward his person and government, and of their patriotic zeal for the general interests of his United Kingdom; and conceiving that his being enabled to avail himself of this distinguished instance of public spirit may be attended with the most important advantages at the present conjuncture, he recommends it to his faithful Commons to adopt such regulations as may enable him to accept the services of such parts of the militia forces of Ireland as may voluntarily offer themselves to be employed in Great Britain, for such time and to such extent, as to the wisdom of Parliament may seem expedient.”—The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* moved that the message be taken into consideration on Wednesday next, on which day he wished to give notice that his right hon. friend unless prevented by indisposition, would state to the House the measures proposed to be adopted for increasing the military force of the country.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday March 27.

[*MINUTES.*]—The bills upon the table were forwarded in their respective stages.

—Lord *Eliot* was sworn and took his seat, on his accession to the peerage by the demise of his father, the late lord.—A few private bills were brought up from the Commons, by Mr. *Lascelles* and other gentlemen.—An account of the salaries, pensions, &c. paid by order of the Irish government at par, within a given period, were, in pursuance of a former motion of Lord *King*, laid before the House. And the same were, on the motion of the noble lord, immediately ordered to be printed.—On the motion of Lord *Auckland*, a committee of their lordships was appointed to enquire into the best means of lighting and warming the House, improving the passages thereto, and the accommodations of the Lord Chancellor and other officers of the House.

[*VOLUNTEER CONSOLIDATION BILL.*]—The order of the day being read for the second reading of the Volunteer Consolidation Bill.

Lord *Hawkesbury* rose, and spoke nearly as follows:—My Lords, in proposing to you that the bill for the regulation of the system, under which the volunteers are embodied, be read a 2nd time, it is my duty to call your attention to the acts, relating to this description of force, which were passed in a former session. I am aware, that this is but a very narrow and limited view of the subject. When I shall allude to the principles of the volunteer acts, I cannot well do it, without alluding to the other measures which his Majesty's govt. have adopted, for supporting, or deriving support from, that species of force, which it is the object of the present bill to render as efficient as the nature of such a body, and the principles of its institution, can reasonably admit; and before I enter upon the details of those other measures of defence, which the govt. has provided, I trust, my Lords, that I may be allowed to make a short observation on the exercise of a right, which I have ever understood to be inherent in the person vested with the executive power of the state—I mean that prerogative residing in the Crown, of calling forth the services of all capable persons in the country, upon actual invasion, or strong apprehension of it. This right, my lords, I conceive to be one of the indefeasible prerogatives of the King of this kingdom; not a prerogative of recent growth, but discoverable in every part of our history; and I own, that it was with much astonishment I heard it controverted

on a former evening, by a noble earl on an opposite bench. I should hope, my lords, that there is not a person in the empire, tolerably acquainted with the constitution, who can entertain a doubt that the principle contained in the preamble of the present bill, namely, that it is the undoubted right of his Majesty to require the services upon certain emergencies, of all ranks of his people, is not a principle coeval with the earliest part of our history, and which, on many occasions, has received all the weight and authority, that the sanction of King, Lords, and Commons, could give it. It is upon that prerogative, which, I trust, will not be contested at this day, that the General Defence Act of a former session was framed, and out of that act the present volunteer system has, in a great measure, arisen. But before I go into the consideration of this bill, I beg leave, my lords, to advert to an observation made by a noble baron (Lord Grenville,) "that much as he admired the volunteers and the loyal and patriotic spirit by which they were actuated, yet he never could consent to their being employed in any other way than as an auxiliary force, in which situation, he had no doubt, but that they would render incalculable service." My lords, to the wisdom and policy of that observation, I most cordially agree; I never imagined, I never intended, that the volunteers should act in any other capacity than as a secondary and subsidiary force; and I am persuaded, that should they be ever called into the field in aid (I mean in that way in which their habits and degree of discipline have best fitted them for) of his Majesty's regular forces, that they will not belie the sanguine expectations that those, who look most favourably upon them, have formed.—I wish, now, my lords, to say a few words as to that other description of force provided by his Majesty's govt. and to which I must always consider the volunteers, as I have said before, secondary and subsidiary: and in communicating to this House, and to the country, the extent of that force, as high perhaps in point of number, certainly as high in character and discipline, as ever the energy and loyalty of a free people supplied, I feel ample matter for confidence and exultation. My lords, we have at this time within the United Kingdom, an army, composed of troops of the line and militia, amounting to no less than 180,000 men.

When I compare this with the force which we had in the months of March and April, 1801, I find that it exceeds it by nearly 40,000. At that period, the peace of Lunneville had established peace on the Continent, and the whole power of France, disembarassed from any other attack, was solely directed against this country; in addition to which, we were then involved in a contest with the Northern Powers, the issue of which was, to speak the most favourably of it, extremely precarious. We had then, my Lords, foreign possessions to garrison and defend which, required, as you all know, a further addition to our force; and yet, with all the demands for it, and the menace of immediate invasion with which we were then threatened, superadded to them, our effective forces in the whole of our empire, internal and external, did not equal that army which we have in actual array at this moment for the defence of the United Kingdom. I say, my lords, our present effective force not only exceeds what we then possessed, but nearly equals the amount of the greatest military establishment that we entertained at any period of our history. I should hope, my lords, that I have said enough to convince this House, that no measures that prudence and precaution could have suggested, for the protection and defence of this kingdom, have been neglected by the govt.; and that when we consider, that in addition to our regular forces, we have in G. Britain alone no less than 330,000 volunteers, we have some reason to look with confidence to an honourable termination of the present arduous and eventful contest. I mean, my lords, to state distinctly, that the efficient volunteer force of this island amounts to 330,000, and I make this statement from the best authorities, not from the offers of service, not from the numbers enrolled, but from the returns of the different inspecting field officers. How and what is the best mode of employing this immense force, is a question which admits of many contrarieties of opinion. I know that many persons, whose opinions are entitled to very great attention, are decidedly averse from employing the volunteers, as other than an armed peasantry; and I must acknowledge that they argue to that effect with great plausibility. I fully concur in the idea, that one of the great advantages that the invaded possess over the invaders, is in the circumstance of having an armed po-

pulation. I know that the advantages to be derived from the incessant attack of this species of force are incalculable in common wars. Where a war becomes protracted, and can only be terminated by a succession of ordinary campaigns; or one sanguinary one, in which every other day may produce a battle; there I will acknowledge the exertions, the activity, and the local advantages of an armed peasantry, may produce the most beneficial effects, and ultimately tend to the discomfiture and annihilation of the enemy. But where the enemy did not intend, and never could reasonably expect to make a permanent conquest; where they only calculated the extent and quantity of mischief they could effect in a given time, and that as short as possible, where they could look for no certain and considerable reinforcements, a position the most detrimental possible to an hostile army, then their object would be to push for the metropolis, or to get, if possible, possession of some of your great naval arsenals, for the purpose of destroying them. To defeat a sudden irruption of that kind, I know no force so competent as that of a regular force, or something nearly approaching to the steadiness and order of its discipline. Of that species of force I conceive the volunteers to be, and I am warranted in my opinion, by the judgment of many experienced military officers, that for the purpose of resisting sudden attack, or a forced march to an important point, they possess decided advantages over an irregular force. I am aware, my lords, that many persons also of great military information, have recommended that the volunteers should only be employed as a desultory force, and that to qualify them for that, it would be advisable that they should unlearn every thing they had acquired in the way of military discipline. I do not see how that could be well done with prudence or safety, considering the crisis in which we are placed, and, I think, it will be more judicious to take the system as it at present is, with all the disadvantages that may appertain to it. We all allow that the principle in itself is good; and where the advantages are numerous and apparent, and the disadvantages not great, I think that by adopting the system, such as it is, we best provide for the interest and safety of the state. The bill for the regulation of that system is now before the House, and I shall trespass but a little time longer on the pa-

tience of noble Lords, while I call their attention to a few of the clauses in it. [The noble Lord here made a few observations on the different clauses relating to the exemptions, the right of resignation, and the election of officers.] I will not deny, my Lords, that there are very great anomalies in this bill, but, notwithstanding, I conceive that the safety of the country may be so essentially provided for by it, that I should hope, the principle at least, may meet with no great opposition in this House. We are to consider that the volunteer force is of that nature, that it will advance in improvement every day, and that considering the different materials of which it is composed, it should be matter of surprize not that there have been some or so many irregularities, but that there have been so few. I know that it has been objected to the volunteer system, that it cannot be permanent, that it has been produced by the exigency of the moment, and that it contains the principles of dissolution in itself. Should that ever happen, of which I must acknowledge, my Lords, I see no reasonable ground of apprehension, it would then be the duty of ministers to advise his Majesty to recur to the General Defence Act. By that Act, his Majesty is authorised to call forth the services of all ranks of his people, and to dispose of them as may seem most fitting to him, for the protection of the state. But I trust, my lords, that his Majesty's ministers will never be reduced to the alternative of advising him to that measure. I have that confidence in the zeal, loyalty, and spirit of the volunteers, that should the moment of danger ever arrive, they will not be found wanting in their duty; that their energies will increase in proportion to the apprehension of invasion; and that they will submit with readiness and cordiality to the various regulations which it is the object of the present bill to establish for the good order and discipline of a force, which I, for one, should be happy to see last as long as the necessity that has given rise to it.

The Earl of Carnarvon expressed his entire disapprobation of the bill, which commenced with an affirmation totally repugnant to the principles of the constitution. His lordship adverted to the General Defence Act, carried through the House in two days; and which in common with the present bill, contained the assertion of a very extraordinary prerogative,

namely, that his Majesty, independent of any consultation with his parliament, possessed an inherent right to array all classes of his subjects in moments of critical danger. His Lordship denied that his Majesty possessed any such prerogative, to the extent that had been stated; and went into an elaborate examination of the ancient military tenures, for the purpose of proving that no deductions to warrant such a right could be drawn from them. His Lordship severely condemned the principles of the General Defence Act; by which he said, every man in the kingdom of a certain age, with the exception of Judges, Clergymen, and Quakers, were liable to be called out, to be placed in the ranks, and to be brought to the halberts, in case of military transgressions. Even the Prince of Wales, were he not commander of a regiment, would not be exempt from the operation of that act. For himself, he was past the age at which he was liable to be called on, but were he not, he would rather put a pistol to his head than submit to the provisions of a law so monstrous and unconstitutional. The present bill, although less offensive, was full as absurd, and he for one must vote against it being referred to a committee.

Lord Ellenborough—My Lords; in this age, when we are daily accustomed to so many adventurous propositions, I really did not expect that any noble Lord would have ventured to question a radical, substantial, unquestionable, and hitherto never-questioned prerogative of the Crown, that of calling forth, upon emergency, the services of all the subjects of this realm. My Lords, from the earliest period of our history, we have been by statute a military people; and this right, inherent in the crown, from the Norman conquest to this day, and which I contend to be indefeasible, cannot be abandoned without the commission of an act of political suicide, both by his Majesty and by his people. My Lords, I have in my pockets one of the most solemn documents to support the opinion I have given, a document carrying the authority of King, Lords, and Commons, and concurred in by what, perhaps, the noble Earl who spoke last, may think of very little consequence, the opinion of the judges who administered justice at that period. My lords, the document I allude to, is, I will admit, not to be found in any of our statute books,

but its authority is not in the least weakened by that. I hold in my hand a copy of the commission of Array, passed in the 5th year of Henry the IVth and to be found in page 527, of the third roll of parliament. That identical statute referred to by Sir Ed. Coke, in his 4th institute, which was written in the reign of James the 1st, was acknowledged by him to be the law of the land at that day, and it has continued so to be to this very instant, for it has never been repealed either positively or by any inference or implication whatever. That statute, my lords, solemnly recognizes that it is a prerogative inherent in his Majesty, to require, in critical cases, such as invasion, or even the apprehension of invasion, the services of all subjects capable of bearing arms, or, in the words of the commission, of all those, "potentes et habiles in corpore." And, my lords, this is not a solitary assertion of that right, but it is to be found at various periods of our history, and particularly in the reigns of Henry VII. of Ed. VI. and of Henry II. This, my lords, is a right consequent to the sword, it does not exclusively belong to the sovereign of this country, but is inherent in whom ever may possess the executive power in any state. If the noble Lord will refer to Vattel, or any other of the writers upon the laws of nations, he will find that they are unanimous in declaring, that such a power makes part of the prerogative, whether royal or executive, in all the countries that possess any thing like a legitimate or civilized government. As to the noble Earl's supposition, that this prerogative conferred the power of throwing all classes of persons indiscriminately into the ranks, I must decidedly oppose it. No, my lords, no such abuse of it can ever be committed, men are to be employed according to their states, to their habits of life, and to the modes in which they may be most useful. But I trust, that in case of extreme necessity, no man, who bears the semblance and appearance of a man, who values his country and his domestic ties, and who is to fight body to body, *pro aris et focis*, will stickle about the mode in which his energies can be most advantageously brought into action. My lords, unfitted even as I am by habit and education for maintaining such a contest, yet in such a case of extreme necessity, I should not think I did my duty to my country, or to my children, if I did not cast this gown

from my back, and employ every faculty of my mind, and of my body, to grapple with the enemy. I shall not at present make any observations on the principle, or the provisions of this bill. I rose merely, conceiving myself alluded to by the noble Earl, for the purpose of declaring what I understood the law to be as to a particular point, and I trust I have satisfied him, as well as other noble Lords.

The Earl of *Carnarvon* professed that he was by no means convinced by the arguments of the noble and learned Lords. Having proceeded to some length in repeating his former reasoning, he was called to order by

The Earl of *Morton*; who gave it as his opinion, that the whole of the noble Earl's speech was irrelevant to the bill before them.

The Earl of *Carnarvon* stated, that he rose for the purpose of explanation, a privilege seldom denied by the courtesy of their Lordships; and if they should on the present occasion deviate from their usual practice, it was competent for him to move for a Committee, in which he would have the liberty of speaking as often as he pleased. His Lordship resumed his argument, when he was a second time called to order by

Lord *Hobart*, who expressed his extreme reluctance to interrupt the noble Earl, but he thought it due to the dignity and regularity of their Lordships proceedings, not to suffer such irrelevant matter to be introduced into the debate; he must, therefore, be under the necessity of appealing to the standing orders of the House.—The order was here read by the Clerk, which was in substance as follows: "that if any noble Lord should desire a committee, it should not be refused him."

Lord *King* wished, as the present was, in all probability, the only opportunity that he should have to debate the principles of the bill, to trespass, for a few minutes, on their Lordships' attention. He would confess that he saw no advantages whatever likely to arise from the present bill, and he conceived that the defence of the country, so far from being improved, was materially injured by the volunteer system in general, and most particularly so by the provisions of the present bill. He censured the ministers for the various incongruous measures they had brought forward at different times, for the defence of the country. The militia and army of

reserve are in direct opposition to each other, and the volunteer system is in positive contradiction to both. He combated the prerogative, as asserted by a noble and learned Lord, and denominated it, a jacobin principle, not unbecoming the worst period of the worst part of the French revolution. He denied that the King, consistent with the principles of the constitution, did possess, or could possess, any such inherent right, as was recited and asserted in the preamble to the bill. His Lordship placed the different provisions of the bill in a variety of contradictory lights, deprecated the idea of ever employing the volunteers as troops of the line, gave it as his opinion, that an armed peasantry would be found much more serviceable and efficient; and concluded with expressing his disapprobation of the present measure.

Lord *Boringdon* spoke in terms of high praise of the volunteers, and entertained no fears of their having any disposition to disband. He did not see much to praise in the present bill, but approved of giving the volunteers the advantage of the militia, when called out. After the many contradictions of last year, he thought it would be rather too sanguine to look to the perfection of the system by this measure.

The Bishop of *Landaff* thought the country was at a most critical moment. The die of its fate was in the air, and every nerve must be exerted in its cause. For that purpose there was need of the efforts of all, though not perhaps of that co-operation of which he had heard mention of certain great and honourable characters, whose talents he most highly admired, and who, he was sure, would not co-operate from any selfish or party view, to gain place or power.—Respecting administration, which had been accused very strongly of inability, he confessed he was not a sufficient judge on that subject. He had seen no proofs, no documents, from which he could establish that conclusion. But if many mistakes had been committed, it should in fairness be remembered, that the present circumstances of public affairs were new, and that, he thought, should form an excuse for mistakes; at least it was so to him.—Of the volunteer system, he would say, that it was most noble in principle, most difficult in execution; but he trusted confidently, it would prove most successful in its effects. Who were the volun-

teers? they were not low, mean beings. They were men of all ranks, even of the highest. They were many of them of the greatest stake of property, and of the first respectability. They comprized all professions, nobility, men of letters, merchants, manufacturers, artizans, yeomen, and the respectable of every description; and they all came forward, animated with glowing enthusiasm and valour. And why did they feel this glorious stimulus? Because they knew that they possessed at present more liberty and more happiness than was possessed by any other nation on the face of the earth. Because they knew that the success of the invader would be the loss of their liberties and of their happiness. The system might not be perfect, but surely it was susceptible of improvements. The question was not upon the principle of the system. It had been adopted, and it must now be maintained. And was there any thing their Lordships would not do to make it as perfect as possible, as a great means of defence? My Lords, do you want arms? Put in requisition all the gunsmiths and blacksmiths throughout the island. Do you want men? His Majesty's prerogative enables him to call out the whole nation. Do you want horses? Put in requisition every coach-horse and saddle-horse, and train them for the purposes of war. Men must in such emergencies go about on foot. Your Lordships will think it no hardship to walk down to this House; and I honour too highly the sex, to suppose that they would complain of any necessary privations in the hour of difficulty. Do you want ships? Hire all the merchantmen and small craft in your harbours. As for large ships, I hope the enemy will build them for you, and that our brave seamen will shew them the way to our own ports. Do you want money? That is a serious question, my Lords, I admit; but in such times taxes must be laid commensurate to public exigencies. All property is the creature of civil society, and you should use it for the public good, and for the security of the country. I dread, my Lords, the power and intrigues of the enemies of my country, and more still, that political paralysis which has deadened the spirit of every cabinet on the Continent of Europe. Oh! my Lords, I had rather be reduced to the meanest situation, live on oat-bread and water, and wear the wooden clogs of Westmoreland, than exist pampered with all that affluence could procure me, and

see my country subjected to the terrors of French domination. And, my Lords, give me leave to say, that it gave me extreme consolation to hear his Majesty's message of last night concerning the Irish militia. I hope and trust that Ireland sees the advantages of her union with us, and that she is disposed to promote and perfect it. I confess, my Lords, that, timid as I am, though I hope not personally, it drove away from my mind the terms of an 100,000 Frenchmen in arms.

Earl *Darnley* entered at some length into the consideration of the principle and particular regulations of the bill. The question appeared to be, whether there was, in fact, any necessity for the volunteering system? and whether, if so, ministers had carried it into execution in the readiest and most effectual manner? He conceived that the regulars and militia were not, under the present circumstances of the country, adequate to its defence, and therefore admitted that there was a necessity for resorting to the aid of volunteers, or a general arming. As to which was most proper—Ministers seemed to have acted under the most distressing uncertainty; indeed, nothing but doubt and inconsistency had marked their conduct upon the subject. They began with holding out no great encouragement to volunteers; then came the Defence Act; then the volunteers were encouraged a good deal more: they were, however, soon repressed again. In the minds of ministers, it was clear there existed no distinct notion of any necessity as to the volunteer system. They brought it forward, and repressed it, just as it suited the opinion of the moment. The measures now under consideration, his Lordship thought, shewed neither cleverness nor consistency. He approved of the volunteer system, but thought it should have been instituted on a more reasonable plan in point of expence. Had this been considered at first, and the system been constructed on regular principles, by this time that body of men would have been as complete as their nature would admit. Ministers, he thought, had acted very absurdly in applying one rule to all the counties. "Ask any man, how little soever acquainted with the subject, he would say it was common sense, that a greater number of volunteers should be permitted in Kent, Sussex, and other maritime counties, to what was allowed in Nottingham or Northamptonshire. So

inconsistently and unwisely had ministers acted upon this subject, that it was altogether incongruous and absurd to apply the word system to such an ill-understood and undigested mass of regulations as related to the volunteers.

The Earl of *Fife* observed, the question now before their Lordships was, that this bill be read a second time: he said that he could not help observing, there had been great irregularity in this debate, by almost entirely departing from the question. He assured their Lordships that he should not take up much of their time. He was too far advanced in life to have any object in speaking, but from public duty. He would not waste time in complimenting ministers on the wisdom of their measures, having very little acquaintance with any of them, except from official correspondence, and he did not even know who were their opposers; he rose as an old volunteer, feeling it his indispensable duty to do justice to that species of force, which upon every occasion had acted with honour and spirit. He said he could not but regret, that many reflections had been thrown out in speeches and in publications against the volunteer system, (which term he should use, notwithstanding it had been disapproved of by a noble Lord), some from ignorance and folly, and others, he was afraid, from worse principles. His Lordship was confident, that the most malicious insinuations would not raise a jealousy between the volunteers and regular army; it was their joint honour and interest to support each other. The numerous body of volunteers all over this kingdom, certainly must appear to our enemies a formidable bulwark of defence of our King, our constitution, our religion, and every thing dear to us.—He had great experience last war in raising volunteers in the county where he has the honour to be Lord Lieut. He has at this time a very considerable number, and might have had a great many more, had govt. accepted of the offers; and he was proud to say, during all that period he never had occasion to make a complaint to the war office but of one, and that was a captain returning a lieut. present when absent, and he was superseded. His Lordship was of opinion, that the volunteers certainly had the power of resigning, but at the same time he was fully convinced that they would never desire to exercise that right so long as their country required

their services; and he said he should have regretted it extremely, had any measure been adopted which should make any alteration in their voluntary and patriotic offers. He was happy to have this opportunity of complimenting a noble and learned Lord on a decision which has done him great honour, and given universal satisfaction. At the same time, with all the attachment which his Lordship said he had to the volunteer system, he could never agree to allow the men the power of choosing their own officers; he had heard of the existence of such a practice, but in the part of the country he was connected with, it had never been heard or thought of. No practice appeared to him to be more dangerous. His Lordship coincided perfectly in the sentiments so ably stated by a reverend prelate, which it was unnecessary for him to repeat. He concluded by saying, that there were many clauses in the bill before the House, which he highly approved of, and therefore gave it his entire support.

Lord *Romney* took a similar view of the subject, and would answer, when the occasion came, the volunteers would be equal to encounter the soldiers of France. They must surely be equal, at least, to forced conscripts chained hand in hand. He felt that the stake at risk was great, but was confident that the volunteers would prove equal to the trial, and repel any force that could be brought against them. Were the danger even more pressing, we should not imagine, for a moment, they would shrink from their duty. On these accounts he thought they should be encouraged, and officers of service should mix among them. One eminent officer had given a great example of this. General Harris, the commander of the Indian army at the siege of Seringapatam, had not thought it beneath him to accept the station of lieut.-col. of a corps of volunteers. He thought, however, that the proportion should have been greater in the maritime counties than in the inland. The policy in this was so clear, as to admit of no doubt, notwithstanding ministers had pursued a different course. With respect to this bill, he thought it contained many regulations which would tend to improve and ameliorate that system; and therefore he should give it his entire support.

The Duke of *Somerset* said a few words, but in so low a tone as almost to be in-

audible. His Grace spoke in favour of the volunteer system in general, without touching on the regulations immediately before the House.

Lord Grenville began by expressing his satisfaction that those who found it their duty to oppose the bill, were not now supposed to be enemies to the volunteer system. It would, indeed, be strange, that those who had used the utmost exertions to consolidate that system, should for a moment be considered as individuals who wished it to be dissolved, even under the present critical circumstances of the empire. No man, he would affirm, could entertain a higher idea than he did of the zeal, the energy, and the spirit of the people of England; and no idea could be more monstrous than to suppose that 400,000 volunteers, who had stepped forward in defence of the liberties and independence of their country, would not be found capable of the most important services. It was not that he doubted of the courage of the volunteers of England, but it was keeping in view, that those whom they were to encounter were troops of undoubted courage, and who had enjoyed the advantage of a degree of discipline obtained in not less than twelve campaigns, in which they were opposed to all the best disciplined troops in Europe. With the knowledge of the enemy to be opposed, it was undoubtedly the duty of ministers to have directed their principal attention to that description of force which was to be encountered. In the present bill, his Lordship declared that he saw not the slightest evidence of a regular military system. Since the commencement of the war, he had hitherto seen no evidence of a system adequate to the crisis in which we were placed, the various parts of which had any reasonable degree of relation or connection. What he had principally to object to the volunteer system, as it at present stood, was, that it had stood in the way of every other department of the national defence. The recruiting not merely of the regulars, but the filling up of the militia, had been materially affected by the provision which the bill now contained. A noble Lord had stated one fact, which effectually proved the assertion which he had submitted to their Lordships' consideration. The fact to which he referred was, that in the county of Kent, at the breaking out of the war, there were not more than thirty-seven individuals em-

bodied out of the whole quota required for that district. Could there, he desired to ask their Lordships, be a more decisive proof of the improvidence and culpable neglect of ministers? Was it not admitted that the peace was not considered to be lasting? Was it not allowed by ministers themselves, that during the short interval of peace, the whole conduct of the enemy had been one uniform system of violence and aggression? On what principle it was, then, that the ministers disbanded the militia, or were so backward in re-embodiment them, he could not pretend to decide. Their conduct in this instance was hardly reconcilable to any of the ordinary principles of human affairs. It was a subject of considerable interest to look to the successive measures of Ministers for the defence of the country. The first in any point of view calculated to secure the augmentation of the regular army, was the bill for raising the army of reserve. But how was the operation of this act encouraged by subsequent proceedings? The conduct of Ministers was characterised by their usual confusion and irregularity. They immediately introduced the General Defence Act, and much time was employed in reducing this measure to any degree of consistency. Hardly two days elapsed, before in two or three lines the whole measure is rendered nugatory. Ministers take on themselves to hold forth, that voluntary offers of service shall be commuted for the provisions of the General Training Act. Not contented with this, they introduce a most extensive and unparalleled system of exemptions. They go so far as to introduce into a volunteer bill provisions, exempting not only from the ballots for the militia and army of reserve then in existence, but from all ballots which might afterwards be appointed by a solemn act of the legislature. What the effect of such a system was, he needed not to enlarge on. It must be obvious to every noble Lord who took the trouble to exercise his judgment on the subject, that such provisions were utterly incompatible with the existence of a regular army. He desired their Lordships to reflect on what had been done for the military defence of the country since the commencement of the present session of Parliament. About five months had already elapsed, and all that had hitherto been brought forward to perfect our military system was, to lay on the table of their

Lordships a Bill which he must be forgiven in pronouncing altogether nugatory. It struck him that the bill was quite inefficient to any great object, not only from the absence of many important provisions, but from the presence of others which were not only useless, but, in his view, highly reprehensible. How far the present objectionable clauses might be removed or amended, he would not now pretend to decide, though he certainly had no very sanguine hope, that even after every effort to improve it, the bill could be rendered adequate to any great permanent object. Considered as a separate measure, it was altogether inefficient. Viewed as a part of a whole, it was utterly incompatible with every other part of the system applicable to the crisis in which the country was placed. He was hardly required to repeat what he had said at the outset of his observations, that he had the most perfect reliance on the zeal and spirit of the volunteers in every part of the empire. At the same time he could not help saying, that the species of force most applicable to the national danger, was that which ministers were in duty bound to bring forward with the least possible delay. Of the courage of the volunteers it was impossible to entertain a doubt; and after the previous experience which had been obtained of the service of the militia, no man would pretend that they were not to be considered as a most important part of our national defence. Ministers, however, ought to have properly balanced the means of uniting and harmonizing the application of these different establishments, so as in the least possible degree to interfere with the military force of the country. So far, however, from having pursued this system, ministers had sacrificed the regular army to establishments, undoubtedly highly useful in themselves but not applicable to circumstances of extraordinary danger. Instead of any encouragement being held out to the regular army, it had been thwarted, opposed, and embarrassed. He really was astonished at the language employed this evening by the noble Sec. of State. He had made use of an expression which, for his own part, was quite novel in the manner in which it had been applied. The noble Lord had spoken of the volunteers and the militia as an established force, and this he seemed to wish their Lordships to consider in contradistinction to our regular army.

This was a sort of language which he professed himself utterly unable to comprehend. He allowed all due praise to the spirit of the volunteers and the militia, but he was desirous that they should be viewed on their proper footing. As to the army of reserve, he saw them in no other light generally than as a depot of recruits for the regular army. Some degree of triumph appeared to be entertained as to the present state of our military establishment. He could not imagine that the noble Lord opposite would persist in holding such language. As the best answer to any statement of this nature, he should wish to be informed, what augmentation had been gained for the regular army since the commencement of the last session? He did not at all mean to deny that the militia, as applicable to local service, might be viewed as to a considerable degree efficient. He was so far from wishing to hold them up in any inferior light, that one of his great objections to the bill was, that the filling up of the quotas for the militia had, by the provisions of the bill, been materially retarded. What he objected to was, that service in a volunteer corps protected not against one ballot for the militia, but against ballots even before the militia were completed. He begged leave to say, that the system pursued by ministers on this subject was essentially different from that pursued during the late war. He did not deny that the volunteer establishment, during the late war, was one which admitted of exemption from the militia ballots, but the exemption was given under quite different circumstances. During the late war, the exemptions given to the volunteers succeeded the embodying of the militia; whereas, as the exemptions now stood, they accompanied and materially interfered with the filling up of the militia. But he begged leave to state, that this was not only the case during the late war, when the volunteers were first established, but after it was judged necessary to extend their numbers. Previous to this augmentation, the supplementary militia had been called for, and it was not till this additional force was filled up, that further offers of voluntary service were accepted. The exemptions given to the volunteers were really far beyond any idea which was entertained on the subject. Hardly two days elapsed after the General Training Act had been passed, before, by the single clause of a commutation for

voluntary service, the whole act was virtually rescinded. He believed that the public at large knew nothing of this most extraordinary alteration. He could on his own behalf state, that though only at a distance of 26 miles from the metropolis, he knew nothing of the matter; and that he first was apprised of this new bill while he was busy in explaining the provisions of the General Training Act, and pointing out the superiority of voluntary offers of service. No sooner was it seen that a deficiency of volunteers was likely to be experienced, than ministers made known their views of those extended exemptions. The volunteer system unexpectedly increased much beyond what they thought necessary; and here again they stepped in to check and embarrass the exertions and enthusiasm of the people. The people were to be perpetually trifled with, and when volunteers did not appear in sufficient numbers, they were to be brought forward by threats of the General Training Bill. It was not at all his object to dispute, under particular circumstances, the right of the Sovereign to call out the population of the country. He must, however, strongly object to the clause in the bill by which that power was defined. As the clause now stood, the power professing to be vested in the crown was monstrous and unconstitutional beyond all previous example. He could not pretend to be so well versed as a noble and learned Lord who had preceded him, in what had been very properly styled the antiquity of the law. Many of the cases cited by the learned Lord did, however, appear to him quite inapplicable to the present age, and the present circumstances of this country. Much stress had been laid on the authority of Vattel, whose *Treatise on the Law of Nations* he had heard repeatedly styled a repository of the lumber of antiquity. He would not enter the lists with the noble Lord as to the constitutional opinions entertained in the time of Hen. III. and Edw. I. with respect to the power of the Sovereign to call out the population of the country. He did not controvert the doctrine of the Sovereign's right generally stated. In the present age, however, it was not to be received without a certain degree of limitation. It was the act not of the Sovereign personally, but of the Sovereign acting under the sanction and authority of Parliament. This was the only intelligible

use of the right in a country professing to be governed by a system of laws fairly and justly administered. When the power was exercised at all, it was to be generally and justly applied. It was not to be made the instrument of injustice, of partiality, or revenge. To suppose that it could be exercised in this way, would be to subvert the whole system of a free govt. To pretend that the prerogative of the crown extended so far, as that any individuals could at pleasure be transferred, either to a regiment of the line, or to a militia regiment, was a position altogether monstrous and abominable. It was objected, and justly, to the odious and tyrannical govt. of France, that the people were liable to be driven to every species of military service. With what propriety, then could ministers call on the people of this country to stand forth in defence of our constitution, if the monstrous power to which he had now alluded was sanctioned? His Lordship contended, that a clause in the bill did sanction such a power, and that this was the first instance of such an arbitrary arrangement in the whole annals of the country. He wished to know from what source such an odious doctrine was derived. He could not derive its origin from the feudal times, for there the terms of service were expressly limited. Was it from the example of the issuing of commissions of array? He conceived that it would be wasting time to shew that these commissions afforded no argument for the unconstitutional power granted by the bill. At the commencement of the civil wars, such a power was contended for by the crown lawyers; but all the ablest legal authorities of that day resisted it. So convinced was the King of the illegality of the power, that it was not acted upon in any instance. After the restoration, it was not attempted to be carried into practice, and militia laws soon after were substituted in its room. His Lordship, after insisting on this constitutional point with great force of argument, concluded by declaring, that the bill was very far from meeting his approbation. He, however, declined entering on minor points till a future stage.

The *Lord Chancellor*, in answer to the noble Lord who had just sat down, insisted that many of the objections of that noble Lord were irrelevant to the present stage of the bill. The question was not in regard to the propriety of the volunteer

system as it generally stood, but whether the bill now before the House ought to be read a second time as a bill designed to regulate and amend that system. The propriety of the general principle had been recognized by former bills, and did not therefore admit of much animadversion. It was impossible for him to confine himself, his Lordship said, to the narrow limits he could have wished, from the turn the debate had taken. All the talents of the noble Lord, and all the talents connected with that noble Lord, or that were engaged with the former administration, could not, his Lordship was persuaded, have effected a more perfect or more complete system than that now introduced by the bill. To shew that such a force was necessary, as could not have been immediately raised or so expeditiously raised in the regular way, his Lordship only requested the House to turn their attention to the circumstances that attended the resolution of this country to enter again into the war. All circumstances considered, it could not have been in the power of the noble Lord, or in the power of those who conducted the last war, to have raised a more efficient or a more numerous force in the same time. It was not fair, his Lordship contended, to criticise the measures of any administration with that severity with which the noble Lord had attacked the present administration. On the same principle, what might he not say of the former administration to which that noble Lord had belonged, and to which he himself was inclined to attach the greatest respect? It was impossible that in such circumstances as existed, any measures could have been adopted to produce more beneficial or more extensive effects than the present volunteer system was calculated to produce. No man, it is true, can deny, that a strong and numerous regular force is desirable and better in many respects than volunteers; but it must be allowed also, at the same time, that such a regular force could not so easily, nor in so short a time, be raised to an amount equal to the efficiency of the Volunteers. Had not the present administration, in this instance, acted upon the same principle as had been acknowledged last war? Should ever the volunteers be called into action, he had no doubt that their exertions would do honour to their country, and be a source of glory to themselves.

Not a man among them, he believed, would survive a defeat. But the proper time, his Lordship argued, to take the different topics under consideration, was in the committee of the House, and not in the present stage of the bill, as none of the objections went so far as to deny the general principle. The noble Lord then went into a long discussion, in answer to Lord Grenville, on the royal prerogative to call out the people in case of actual danger. Against the restrictions which the noble Lord had imposed on that prerogative, he entered his most solemn protest, and argued the propriety of this prerogative, from the necessity of the case in which it was supposed to be exercised. This prerogative was claimed only in case of invasion, and the good of the country, and the safety of the people would then require such a sacrifice, even independent of the law of the case, into which also, however, his Lordship went at considerable length. His Lordship here put a case, that should an invasion be made, and a landing effected when Parliament was not sitting, and at a time, perhaps, when Parliament could not constitutionally sit, what would be the result should this prerogative of the crown be suspended, or even so limited as to render it ineffective? If not a principle of law, let it not be made so. It will be difficult, however, to make it otherwise, while it must be recognised, in certain instances, as a principle of necessity or expedience.

Lord Grenville said, he had never contended that the Sovereign had not a right, in case of invasion, to call upon the services of his liege subjects, because that the King had a right, representing the community, to call, in such a case of extreme necessity, upon the services of all his subjects for the public defence, was not only a constitutional principle, but formed a part of the essence of civil society. The thing which he objected to was this, that this bill, in carrying this principle into execution, gave the crown a power, not to call upon the whole or any class of the people, but upon any individual, and to place him in any regiment of the line, or militia.

Earl Spencer thought the volunteer system as it stood, could not meet the approbation of the House. He was by no means an enemy to Volunteer Corps. He had the honour to belong to one since the year 1794, the period of their first formation,

but he thought administration had begun at the wrong end, and instead of rendering the Volunteers an auxiliary force as they were intended, had, by the exemptions introduced, crippled the regular service. So much was this the case, that the noble Lord (the Lord Chancellor), whose ingenuity was generally acknowledged, had been obliged to have recourse to old arguments to support the measure. He was no enemy in general to the argumentum ad hominem, but he thought it was introduced with a very bad grace on the present occasion. Whatever might be the principle of the Provisionary Cavalry, under the former Administration, he could not see the application of it in the present instance. Of the Provisionary Cavalry Act, his Lordship said, he himself had had the honour to approve, but under circumstances, and under regulations very different from the present act.

Lord Hobart defended generally the conduct of govt. with respect to the exertions they had made for placing the country in a situation of defence equal to the exigencies of the present moment. This country now exhibited a force unexampled in its history of 628,000 men in arms, and he thought that the exertions of the present administration, in getting forward so large a force, were equal to the exertions of any former minister, even when every allowance was made for the difference of the present times, which required considerably greater exertions than were necessary in any former war. The greatest military force that this country possessed for its defence in that period of the last war, when it was at the highest, amounted to 175,000 regulars and militia, and 168,000 volunteers; but now the whole force of the United Kingdom amounts already to 628,000 men in arms, a number, too, which is daily increasing as the vacancies in the militia are filled up. Most of the noble Lords who had spoken, appeared, and with great reason, to be much attached to that part of our force which was called regulars; he could assure them that that part of our force was at present very nearly as high as at any period of the last war; we had now of that description, 98,000 in G. Britain, Ireland, and the islands in the Channel; but he had been always accustomed to consider the militia also on the footing of regulars. Above two-thirds of their number were already completed, and their

number, as he before stated, was daily increasing as their vacancies were filled up. The measures that had been taken were calculated to give confidence to the country, and to assure every man that there was nothing to be feared even from the loudest threats of the enemy. The force of the country, in fact, was such as to enable every man to look forward with tranquillity and confidence to the enjoyment of the advantages of our happy constitution.

The Duke of Montrose did not oppose the volunteer system, nor the principle of the bill, but objected very strongly to some of the clauses, and particularly to that clause in which, after the necessity of encouraging the volunteers to go upon permanent duty was admitted, the guinea bounty, which was proposed for an inducement to them, was to be laid out in necessaries at the discretion of the commanding officer: he disapproved of this, as taking away the inducement which was held out: and as to the article of great coats, which were stated to be so necessary, he believed there were very few volunteers who were not already possessed of great coats, which, whatever might be their colour, were sufficient to keep them warm: even if they had not great coats, a blanket, in actual service, might answer the purpose as well. If they wanted these things, however, they ought to be got, whatever was the expence. He had not so poor an idea of the resources of this country, or of any other country, as to suppose they could not afford to provide that which was absolutely necessary to enable their soldiers to take the field. In speaking of the perfection to which volunteers might be brought by skilful officers, he took notice of the volunteers with which he was best acquainted, the volunteers in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, who had made such a proficiency, that it was allowed by military men that they were perfectly fit to take the field with regular troops. General Simcoe, and other general officers, had borne similar testimony of volunteer regiments in other parts of the United Kingdom. He had heard military men, of great experience and judgment, say, that the first qualification for soldiers was the intention to fight: in this qualification he supposed none of the volunteers of the empire would be found deficient. He concluded by expressing his disapprobation of the exemptions

which were granted, and of some other parts of the bill, but wished that it might go to a committee.

The Earl of *Westmoreland* said, he was not surprised that there existed a difference of opinion upon this important subject. In considering it, however, it was necessary to take a view of the real situation in which the country stands. We were at present engaged in a war for the purpose of deciding, not whether we are to maintain our present high rank among the nations of Europe, but whether the British empire was any longer to enjoy existence. Our commercial strength depends upon our military strength. We must recollect, that our enemy is as regardless of the lives of his soldiers or subjects, as he is of those of his enemies. Such being the case, we must therefore powerfully feel the necessity of strong exertions. He was persuaded that the spirit which prevailed in the country was amply sufficient to enable it to encounter its dangers. So long as there existed any apprehension of invasion, it was necessary to guard against it; and the system which had been adopted was the most proper for that purpose. We must recollect the great number of vulnerable points on our coast, and how near our metropolis is situated to the coast of the enemy. It was impossible for the country to supply a regular army, sufficiently numerous for its immediate defence, without the assistance of the armed population. The only question was, how is that to be obtained? For his part, he could not see any means more efficacious than those which ministers had adopted. As to the excellence of an armed peasantry, he thought it was quite ideal. Had any person asked him, previous to any of the discussions on the volunteer bill, why he preferred volunteers in the present situation of the country, he would have answered, that it was because the volunteer system was one which did not interfere with the militia, army of reserve, on the recruiting of the regular army. The objections stated against the system constituted the very reasons for which he approved of it. It was not from theory alone, but from practice, he grounded his opinion. The militia force was already nearly completed. The volunteer system lessened the number of balloted men, but increased the number of substitutes. The volunteers were much greater sufferers than if they had actually endured the bal-

lot. The very circumstance of handling arms inspired great numbers of young men, who were volunteers, with a military spirit, which encouraged the recruiting of the regular army. This he experienced during last war, when a proportion of 50 out of 600 volunteers entered yearly as recruits for the regular army. The volunteer system did not tend to interrupt offensive operations, for it would certainly be the greatest madness not to provide in the first place for our safety at home. He thought his Majesty's servants stood upon safe grounds, when they had thus far followed the steps of their predecessors. Never was there such a large force collected in such a short time, and for that his Majesty's ministers were justly entitled to the approbation and the thanks of the country, for their great exertions and attention to the public interest. During the present war, we had already reason to be thankful that we have defended our own possessions, taken those of the enemy, and blockaded their own ports, so as hitherto to prevent them from putting their schemes into execution: He had every reason to believe that the measures which govt. had adopted, and which the present bill went to improve, would be the means of continuing those blessings to the country which we had hitherto enjoyed.

Lord *Auckland* said, he by no means entertained such gloomy apprehensions as some noble Lords appeared to do, respecting the probable duration of the war, or the final result of it; he hoped that the end of it would be, that France would not be permitted to retain her dominion over the continent of Europe; but whether the termination of it was near or at a distance, the country had this year placed itself higher than ever in the opinion of all nations, and might be justly proud of its military strength. If he was asked his opinion, whether 628,000 men in arms were enough for the defence of the country in the present circumstances, he should say, he believed the number was considerably more than we wanted. Although, of course, every noble Lord must wish the country to be in the most perfect state of security, yet there were certainly some limits to be placed to the number called out in its defence, and that upon different considerations: 1st, as to economy, can we afford to pay such an immense number of men? and, 2dly, in point of prudence and general policy, is

it right, beyond what is necessary, to extend the military spirit indefinitely among all classes of the nation? These were questions he should not then pretend to discuss. He thought the exertions of administration had brought forward a number of men completely adequate to the defence of the empire, and that there was little more wanting than to make the system already adopted as efficacious as possible.—The question for the second reading of the bill was then put, and carried without a division. It was accordingly read a second time, and

Lord *Hawkesbury* moved, that it be committed on Thursday se'nnight, being the first day of meeting after the recess.

Lord *Harrowby* stated some objections as to the delay which would thus be occasioned; and wished some earlier day to be appointed, as he conceived it to be of the utmost importance that volunteers should go upon permanent pay and duty as soon as possible.

Lord *Hawkesbury* said, that there was nothing in the bill that would occasion any necessity for its being hurried through its remaining stages. He understood, that upwards of 30,000 volunteers had already gone upon permanent pay and duty, in the manner proposed by the bill; and he had every reason to think that a great many more would, in the mean time, pursue the same plan to perfect themselves in their discipline.—The motion for the bill being committed on Thursday se'nnight, was then agreed to, and the House, at 11 o'clock, adjourned till to-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, March 27.

[MINUTES.]—Several petitions were presented against the Marine Society Fishery Bill; among them were the following:—two from the owners of fishing vessels, &c., at Gravesend, the one against the principle of the bill, the other against some specific clauses which they apprehended would materially affect their interest. They were presented by Mr. *Calcraft*.—Another from the owners of vessels, fishermen, &c., of the town of Harwich, against the general principles of the bill. Ordered to be laid upon the table until the bill should be read a second time, and parties to be heard by counsel, &c.—Another petition was presented by Mr. *Princep*, to the same effect, from the

fishermen of Feversham. Ordered to be laid on the table until the bill be read a second time.—Mr. *Sheridan* gave notice, that he should to-morrow submit to the consideration of the House a motion on the subject of referring the Liskeard Election to a committee.—Several accounts of Irish Shipping, and their Tonnage, &c. &c., were laid before the House, and which were ordered to be printed.—On the subject of the Irish Militia Families' Bill, Mr. *Corry* observed, that he had some amendments to propose upon the report, which he should defer until to-morrow, on account of the absence of a right hon. gent. (Mr. *Foster*) who had already taken a share in the discussion of that subject. He therefore moved "that this report be taken into further consideration to-morrow." Ordered.—Mr. *Corry* then moved, "That there be laid before the House an account of the number of balloted men serving in the several regiments of militia of Ireland, on the 1st of Nov. 1803, distinguishing the time they were balloted." Ordered.—Mr. *Fellowes* moved, "That there be laid before the House an account of the quantity of wheat, flour, barley, malt, oats, meal, peas, and beans, imported into G. Britain and Ireland, distinguishing England and Ireland, from the 5th of Jan. 1803, to the 5th of Jan. 1804, together with the bounties or drawbacks, paid thereupon; and also all bounties allowed on barley, rye, &c., in the years 1801, 2, and 3, respectively." Ordered.

[MARINE SOCIETY FISHERY BILL.]—On the order of the day being read, for the House to resolve into a committee on the Marine Society Fishery Bill, counsel were ordered to be called to the bar against the bill, when

Mr. *Calcraft* rose, and observed, that it might have been reasonably expected that the framers of the bill, before they were to expect the House would finally adopt a measure so severely injurious to so many industrious individuals and their families, as this bill must almost inevitably bring to ruin, would at least hold out some advantage likely to be derived to the public by the measure, in lieu of the immunities, a surrender of which they required; but no such advantages had they held out, nor had the House before it any document to shew the necessity of depriving one of the most laborious and useful classes of men in society, their wives and children, of their means of live-

lihood, merely to promote the advantages, or second the interested views of any monopolizing company. The purposes alleged by this bill were, to reduce exceedingly the prices of fish at Billingsgate market, and, by increasing the quantity, to reduce the price of provisions for the poor. But what security did the bill, or its proposers, offer to the public, that such a result would accrue, or that fish could be reduced lower than two-pence per pound, the price at which it was now generally sold at Billingsgate? There was an instance of the establishment of a monopolizing company, instituted a very short time since, under the appellation of the London Flour Company, whose professed object it was to reduce most considerably to the public the prices of flour, meal, and bread. But how far, he would be glad to ask, did that company succeed, while it continued in existence? Or what was now become of that company, no longer visible? Here then was a criterion by which the House might judge; and to prove that the only advantage that could arise from the passing of this bill, would be to gratify the monopolizing speculations of a new and unknown set of men, to the almost certain ruin of so many thousand of industrious individuals, who had devoted their lives and industry to the business of fishing in all weathers, and at all risks, for the regular supply of the London market, of the sufficiency of which supply no complaints had been made; a body of men, who, in all exigencies, afforded a supply of able and expert seamen for our navy, and whose community, within the last year, afforded a supply of above 200 pilots for the service of govt. Such an object as the livelihood of such a community, was too great to sacrifice to any such speculation as the present bill. It was before the House last Session, and rejected upon the clearest ground of its inadmissibility. What new proofs, he would be glad to know, had since been discovered of its propriety? He had the authority of an hon. friend of his, member for a neighbouring county, a very great portion of whose inhabitants would be materially injured by this bill, to declare his opposition to it; and he concluded by moving an amendment in the order for the committal of the bill for this day, that instead of the word "now," the words "this day six months" be inserted.

Mr. Hiley Addington rose to second the

motion of the hon. Member, and at the same time begged leave to add a few observations to what had fallen from him on the occasion. He asked the hon. gent.'s pardon for reminding him that the bill of last year on the subject, was not rejected by the House, but withdrawn by its framers for that time, with a view to reconsider the propriety of bringing it forward at a future day, in a more perfect shape; and he must own, he thought it rather extraordinary those gent. after having coolly reconsidering the bill, could again think of offering it for the adoption of parliament; for he could consider it in no other view than as a measure calculated merely to favour a monopoly, and he therefore trusted the House never would consent to pass it into a law, as it was of a tendency not only extremely injurious to one of the most useful, industrious, and important classes of the community in the country, but of the utmost danger to the very existence of that fishery which it professed to improve. To his certain knowledge, a number of persons, who, as well as their grandfathers, and great grandfathers before them, had been deeply engaged in and derived their livelihood from this trade, had recently, under the apprehension which he thought unfounded, namely, that this bill would pass into law, actually sold off the ships they occupied in the trade, and many had even forfeited contracts into which they had entered, and risked all the penalties they incurred thereby. He was sorry that any class of the community should be induced to entertain apprehensions that the legislature would, in the wisdom of its deliberations, suffer any measure to pass into a law for the advantage of one set of men, so injurious to the interests of so numerous, useful, and industrious a class of individuals. He stood not there merely a representative for a particular borough, whose inhabitants would be materially injured by the bill, to oppose it; but as a representative of the community at large, and for the general good. The advantages derived to the navy from this valuable class of men, was a matter worthy of serious consideration; no less than three thousand apprentices were actually bringing up on board the ships employed in the trade; for the supply of fish in the port of London. The House must see how impossible it would be for those men individually to stand up against the high bounties that

would be offered by a wealthy company, which must deprive them of their hands, and, at the same time, not increase the quantity of fish, but transfer the profits of the trade from the industrious individuals, in whom it was now vested, and thereby destroy competition, and leave the community at the mercy of a monopolizing company.

Mr. *Hurst* said he had a host of objections against the bill; but two in particular, which he thought insurmountable. When so material an alteration was proposed in the existing laws, for the regulation of so important a branch of trade, some broad and palpable ground should, he thought, be laid down to shew the necessity; but in this case, no such ground had been shewn. No advantage was proved practicable, and yet the House was called on to adopt a bill for vesting a monopoly in a new company of men, which must, in the first instance, ruin every town upon the river Thames, and upon the coasts in the vicinage of the metropolis; hence he could not agree to the bill. Another objection to it was, that it went to enable the company it proposed to incorporate to employ any number of seamen they thought necessary, and to protect them from the impress service; he was no particular friend to the impress service, but he had no idea of giving to any particular body, but particularly a new monopolizing company an exclusive protection, which no other branch of the British marine could be allowed to enjoy. Besides, he was well informed, that the evil stated in this bill, of an unfair price being demanded for fish at Billingsgate, did not exist. It was put up there fairly to auction to the highest bidder, and sold at the fairest price; and to take it now out of the hands of individuals, long experienced in the trade, and interested in a competition, and place it in the hands of the Marine Society, who knew nothing of the business, would be to destroy competition and sanction monopoly.

Sir *William Dolben* spoke in favour of the bill, and thought the best way to put the House fairly in possession of its merits, or demerits, would be to let it go to a committee for investigation. It was said, in the petitions on the table, that the bill would be injurious to the navy; but he begged to know, if our present fisheries were an useful nursery for seamen, and therefore useful for the navy, how the

establishment of an additional nursery could be injurious? The alledgment on this point, therefore, was merely assertion, and not fact. But did gent. consider, that if, as was said, 3,000 apprentices were living on board the fishery ships, that the Marine Society had sent upwards of 56,000 seamen to the navy? Surely, therefore, some consideration was due to their institution; and the present bill had for its object, not only to enable the Marine Society to extend the means of rearing seamen, but of lowering the price of an important article of provision to the public. Much had been said of the danger of creating a corporation, at the risk of a monopoly. He believed, however, that the public had already experienced much greater mischiefs from a combination, than could be apprehended from a corporation: and that, from the combinations between the fishermen, and their agents at Billingsgate, much imposition had been practised on the public. It was said, the gent. of the Marine Society knew nothing of the fishing trade; this assertion he must take leave to contradict, for many of them were many years extensively experienced, and had large capitals vested in it.

Sir *William Geary* supported the bill, and said, if he could conceive it would tend to sanction a monopoly, he should be one of the last men in that House to support it. He wished, however, that the bill might be suffered to go into a committee, where these assertions might be put to the test, and the proofs examined, and its merits or demerits fairly shewn. It was ridiculous to talk of a monopoly in a commodity, the produce of which knew no bounds, but were utterly inexhaustible; and so far would the extension proposed by the bill be from producing injury to individuals fairly interested in the trade, that 10 times the capital and number of ships now employed on our coasts would be in operation; ample markets would be found in this country for all the fish they could procure. The only persons who had injury to apprehend from the bill, were those concerned in the combinations carried on against the public at Billingsgate. The friends of the bill had in view the two-fold object, of raising boys for the navy, and cheapening and rendering plentiful an important article of wholesome food to the public. No man could more seriously wish to oppose monopoly than

he did, but he desired the bill to have a fair investigation in the committee.

Mr. *Peter Moore* strenuously opposed the bill, and observed, that the House could not be at a loss for a precedent to guide its decisions upon this head; for if they would turn to their Journals for 1750, they might there find the record of a bill having passed their House on the same ground proposed by the present, but which, after three years of experience, instead of an advantage, proved an absolute nullity, as he had no doubt the present bill would do, if it passed into a law. No less a sum than 500,000*l.* had been subscribed under the authority of that bill, and at the end of three years it was found totally to fail, and the only return the subscribers got for their money, was 3 per cent. for 14 years. Should the present bill pass into a law, he had no doubt but the plan would be speedily extended by subscriptions; that very speedily a board of 24 directors would be found necessary, who would not like to act without ample salaries; that a house like the India House, or the South Sea House, would be found necessary for their operations, with appropriate officers, secretaries, and clerks: and, in a little time, so far from reducing the price of fish would their scheme be found, that they must sell every sprat they could catch at the price of a turbot, in order to defray their expences.

Mr. *Princep* opposed the bill as a mere speculation, by which no laudable purpose was likely to be answered.

Mr. *Blackburn* thought that the bill ought at least to be allowed to go into a committee.—The question was then called for, when the House divided. For the original motion 35; for Mr. *Calcraft's* amendment 38:—majority against the bill 3.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, March 28.

[*IRISH MILITIA OFFER BILL.*—Lord *Hawkesbury* moved the order of the day for the consideration of his Majesty's message relative to the offer of the Irish militia to extend their services to G. Britain.—The message being read, his Lordship rose and observed, that he should deem it unnecessary to trouble the House on this subject at any length, as it was an affair of a partial nature. When the measure should come in a full and regular manner before the

House, then would be the time to enter upon the discussion of it. It was now in the contemplation of his Majesty's ministers to submit to Parliament a measure for the general defence of the United Kingdom, which would comprise several improvements in the militia systems of G. Britain and Ireland; and when this was brought forward, the matter would no doubt undergo a thorough investigation, suited to its importance. In the mean time, the House would be pledged for nothing, as the motion which he would now submit to their consideration, was little else than an expression of thanks to his Majesty for his communication. It was, however, impossible for him to withhold his tribute of applause from the noble, spirited, and patriotic offer of those troops, whose conduct had occasioned this message being presented to the House. He was of opinion that it would be of the highest advantage both to G. Britain and Ireland. It was of the utmost consequence that the two countries should, as much as possible, be united in sentiment, in feeling, and in the mutual employment of their means of defence. This unity would be prodigiously accelerated by this patriotic conduct of those troops who had extended their services; and he had no doubt, if occasion should call for it, that the English militia would not be behind hand in spirit and public zeal. But this extension of service would be highly useful in another point of view. It would increase the disposable force of the empire, and enable us to turn our energies with more effect against the enemy. It would consolidate the strength of the empire, and by that means render its application more easy and formidable. Without troubling the House at any greater length, only again repeating the high sense he entertained of the spirit of loyalty and patriotism of the troops who had offered to extend their services, he would move, "That an humble address be presented to his Majesty, expressive of the gratitude of the House for his communication, and stating, that their Lordships would most readily concur in the measures that should be adopted to give effect to the offer which was made,"—The question being put upon this motion,

The Duke of *Montrose* said, he fully agreed in the tribute of applause that had been paid by the noble Sec. of State to the spirit, loyalty, and patriotism of the troops in question; but when he concurred

in this tribute of applause, he could not suffer it to pass without a few remarks, and among others, that he thought it unsafe and impolitic to encourage that spirit of deliberation among armed bodies, that led to voluntary offers being made. He was far from being insensible to the praiseworthy motives by which these troops were actuated, but he was averse to the principle of deliberation among armed men. He was averse to those measures which tended to impress an idea among the troops, that certain services were more of a voluntary nature, than an exertion of duty. If his Majesty's ministers thought that the services of the Irish militia were necessary in England, let them propose a measure to that effect. If they thought the services of the English militia necessary in Ireland, their services ought, by act of Parliament, to be extended to that country. This would be the true and manly course of proceeding on the part of ministers; and in such a case these services, instead of being a favour, would become a duty. He knew there were many who thought that there was something inconsistent with the nature of a militia force in this extended service, and that it could not properly be changed. Perhaps so, but at the same time it ought to be recollected, that the circumstances of the times called for a more permanent, efficient, and numerous force than usual. It ought to be recollected, that the relative situations of the British empire and of France were materially changed. It was now necessary that this country should become a more military nation than it had ever been. A notion was entertained by several people respecting the militia, that in case their services were extended, we might lose many valuable people in that establishment, but that loss would be made up by the efficiency of the force. We should lose many old men who commanded the militia, and who had a good deal of experience. But he was of opinion that we ought to have not only young men in the ranks, but also in command. An old man of experience would avoid mistakes, but his attention would in general be directed to that point instead of thinking how to gain a victory. A young man, on the contrary, would be thinking how to gain a victory, and would probably gain one at last, though he committed several mistakes in the road that led to it. Most of the victories mentioned in history

were gained by young men; and the histories of the young and the old King of Prussia was an apt illustration of what he had been saying. In the meantime, however, this ought to be a military country, and it ought to be a point of honour with the nobility and gentry of the nation to make themselves acquainted with military affairs, and serve either in the regulars or the militia. He would not oppose this motion, as it was merely an address of thanks for his Majesty's communication; but he again expressed his disapprobation of the deliberative principle among armed men.

The Marquis of *Sligo* joined heartily in the tribute of applause that had justly been bestowed upon the noble and patriotic men who had come forward with a voluntary offer of an extension of their services. He rejoiced in the prospect that it had opened, of having the services of the militia of both countries being made reciprocal, as it would go to establish that principle of unity which ought to subsist between Great Britain and Ireland. The sooner a complete union, in every point of view, was effected, the better it would be for both countries. He heartily joined in the address which it was now intended to present to his Majesty, and would only farther say, that he apprehended this was no partial offer, but that it was made by the whole militia of Ireland.

The Earl of *Limerick* begged leave also to join in the applause that had on all hands been given to the patriotic offer of the troops in question. He was aware of the incalculable advantages that would result from it, both to this country and to Ireland. He heartily agreed, that the two countries should as much as possible, be assimilated. The Irish troops had thus shewn their love for the country, their zeal and attachment to the constitution, which he knew distinguished not only the troops in question, but the whole army in Ireland. But to pronounce their eulogium did not become a person in his situation; that he would leave to other Lords: and it was his intention to have contented himself with a silent vote on the present occasion, but something had fallen from a noble Duke (of Montrose) to which he could not but advert. He had said, if his memory served him rightly, that it would be manly in ministers to bring forward a measure which would render the extension of the militia service a

duty, instead of a favour. It might be manly, perhaps, but it ought to be recollected that it might also be dangerous to force men who had enlisted for one service to engage in another. It would, besides, be a positive instance of bad faith, that ought to be particularly avoided. He saw no danger whatever in accepting a voluntary offer of extended service; and he deprecated all idea of forcing men to undertake a service for which they had not been enlisted, nor had in their contemplation at the time. The men had engaged for a particular service, and beyond that they could not be carried without their own consent. He gave his warmest approbation to the address.

Lord Grenville observed, that as this motion did not go to pledge the House to any thing, but was merely an address of thanks to his Majesty, stating the satisfaction of the House at the offer which had been made, he did not mean to throw any difficulty in its way. But he certainly entirely agreed in the sentiments that had been delivered by the noble Duke, (of Montrose). He was fully convinced of the impolitic and injudicious nature of introducing into the army a deliberative spirit, which had its origin in the volunteer system. Parliament was the place where deliberation ought to take place; and they ought, in the first instance, to adopt measures which it would be incumbent on the military of every description to obey, instead of having their deliberation dependent upon any voluntary offers that might be made. It was impossible certainly to withhold the highest tribute of applause from the men who had made the present patriotic, spirited, and loyal offer of an extended service. He did not at all mean to throw any reflection upon them. He most entirely concurred with what the noble Marquis (of Sligo) had said, that the two countries ought to be united closely together, not in name only, but in effect; and he believed that the reciprocal services of the militia of both countries would be a desirable thing; but it ought to be recollected, that his Majesty's ministers had been advised to extend the services of the militia of Ireland, when they were raised at the beginning of the war, to this country. They were raised by bounty, not by ballot, but the advice was rejected. It had been said, that our hands were tied by good faith to the militia: it was true; but to whom was this owing?

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It was to those ministers who rejected the sound advice given them, when that might easily be done which was now impossible; and thus their Lordships were compelled, instead of originating a measure, to follow the lead of these voluntary offers. The offers of the militia, during the late war, to serve in Ireland, had arisen from the spur of the occasion, and were therefore properly accepted and appreciated. But it was now the fault of ministers, that it had been left to the patriotism of the Irish militia to make an offer of their services to England. He had nothing to offer on the motion itself. He admired the patriotism of the Irish troops in question, and agreed in the applause which had been bestowed upon them, but he wished to impress the House with a sense of the danger of encouraging deliberation among armed bodies of men.

Lord Hobart, in reply to Lord Grenville, observed, that he recollected no such advice as had been referred to, but now it was impossible to break our faith with the militia. He concurred in the applause bestowed on the troops in question, and said, that from his long residence in Ireland, he knew that an equal spirit of patriotism prevailed in the whole army in that country.

Earl Darnley only rose to advert to a point mentioned by the noble Sec. of State. He could not perceive how the reciprocal services of the militia of both countries could augment our disposable force. He agreed in the applause bestowed on the troops in question, but the message was worded in such a way, that there was no understanding whether the offer had been made by all the militia, by whole regiments, or by parcels of regiments. This was a point of some importance to ascertain.

Lord Grenville wished that the subject should be properly understood. Was it all the militia who had offered, or some regiments, or was it some parcels of regiments?

Lord Hawkesbury said, that as far as his recollection served, it was made by whole regiments.—The question on the address was then put and carried without opposition.

[PRIESTS' ORDERS.]—On the second reading of the *Priests' Orders Bill*,

The Bishop of *St. Asaph* observed, that the united Church was under obligations to the noble and learned Lord who had

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turned his attention to this measure, and removed the ambiguity of the Church laws on this subject. He should have a good deal to say when the bill came to be committed. Churchmen had an idea that ordination could not be done away when regularly conferred: he was of that opinion, but agreed in the clause which went to make it void, in case conferred before the proper age, and the reasons for his opinion he would give in the committee.—The bill was then read a second time, and ordered to be committed on Friday se'ennight.—The House then adjourned for the recess to Thursday se'ennight.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, March 28.

[MINUTES.]—A new writ was issued for the election of a member, in the room of James Hare, Esq. deceased.—A message from the Lords informed the House, that their Lordships had agreed to the Expiring Laws Bill, to the Flax-Seed Importation Bill, and several private bills.—An account was laid on the table, by Mr. Steele, of the amount of the Army Extraordinaries up to the 24th Dec. 1803. Ordered to lie on the table, and to be printed.—A particular account was also laid upon the table from the Treasury, of the different sums stated in the disposition-paper, stating how much of them had been paid into the Treasury, and how much yet remained to be paid in. Ordered to lie on the table.—The Pancras Poor Bill was read a third time, and passed.—A petition was presented from the malsters of the county of Essex against the malt duty. Ordered to lie on the table.—Lord Marsham appeared at the bar, and stated, that he was requested by the committee, of which he had the honour to be president, to represent to the House that the committee had now been sitting for eight weeks; that the counsel on both sides were of opinion, that no ultimate delay would be occasioned in the decision of the case before them, even were they allowed to adjourn for a few days; on the contrary, they should be better enabled to proceed in the business, by having this leisure time allowed them; nor would the adjournment give rise to any additional increase of expense. On these grounds, he trusted the House would permit the committee to adjourn, on their

rising to-morrow, till Monday the 9th of April next. The noble Lord concluded with a motion to that effect.—The Speaker observed, that there were several instances of such indulgence having been granted to election committees at this season of the year.—The question was then put and agreed to without opposition.—The further consideration of the report of the committee appointed to inquire into and adjust the differences between the cotton manufacturers and the persons employed by them, was deferred till Monday, the 9th of April next.—Mr. Curwen moved for an account of the different duties paid in the ports of the Isle of Man, from the year 1798 to the year 1804, distinguishing the sums paid for bounties, and also the sums that remained. Ordered.

[IRISH MILITIA FAMILIES.]—Mr. Corry moved the order of the day for taking into further consideration the report of the bill for providing for the Irish militiamen and their families.

Mr. Foster renewed his objections to the bill, more particularly to the clause which went to deprive certain of the militia of the benefit which former bills held out to them, and on the condition of being entitled to which they had enlisted. He enumerated the various hardships to which their wives would be exposed, if the present clause remained unaltered, and contended that it would operate with regard to the militiamen, to whom he had more particularly alluded, as a breach of faith on the part of Parliament.

Mr. Corry observed, that when the bills to which the right hon. gent. referred were passed, they had the concurrence of that right hon. gent. The mode in which the proposed allowances were formerly paid differed materially from that in which it was now intended they should be paid. They were now to flow immediately from the Exchequer: and if the clause was amended in the manner the right hon. gent. suggested, it would become an impediment in the way of the new regulations which it was deemed expedient to adopt. The militiamen were now entitled to as good an allowance as they were formerly; and he was at a loss to see how the new plan could be considered as a breach of faith on the part of Parliament.—After a few words in explanation between Mr. Foster and Mr. Corry, the clause was allowed to remain in its ori-

ginal form; and the amendments being agreed to, the bill was ordered to be read a third time to-morrow.

[*MALT DUTIES.*]—Lord *Archibald Hamilton*, anxious that on the part of Scotland every possible information should be laid before the committee appointed to inquire into what difference should be allowed in the duty payable on malt made from Scotch barley, and that made from English barley, rose pursuant to notice, to move, that four gents., whom he should name, be further added to that committee. The noble Lord then moved, that Sir John Sinclair be added to it; agreed to: also Mr. Kinnaird, also Sir William Erskine; agreed to: also Sir William Pulteney. But here it was observed, that the hon. Baronet's name stood already among those who had been appointed on the committee.

Sir *Robert Buxton* thought that England was as much interested in the consideration of this question as Scotland could be; he should therefore move to-morrow (not being now prepared with the names), that four gents. from the latter part of Great Britain be further added to the committee.

Mr. *Kinnaird* observed, that the addition proposed by his noble friend was not intended as increasing the number of voters, but the mass of information that might be brought before the committee.

[*LISKEARD ELECTION.*]—Mr. *Sheridan* rose to present a petition on the part of T. *Sheridan*, Esq., complaining of an undue return for the above borough at the last election. The hon. gent. said, that he should move that the petition be taken into consideration on as early a day as possible after the 17th of April, on which day the petition on the question of right was to be discussed. Indeed, he did not imagine that the petition presented by the other candidate, and which stood for the 9th of next month, could with propriety be considered and decided upon, until after the question of right should have been settled. The decision of that question might materially affect the fate of the petition which he had just presented, and he could not see that the delaying of the former petition till after the decision of the question of right could be attended with any disadvantage.—Monday, the 23d of April, was accordingly fixed upon for taking into consideration the petition in behalf of Mr. T. *Sheridan*.—Mr. *Sheridan*

then proceeded to move, that the order of the day for taking the other petition into consideration, be now read, for the purpose of next moving, that the said order be discharged, and another made out for a further day.

Mr. *Pitt* complained of irregularity on the part of the hon. gent. in having omitted to give notice of this motion. He also contended, that, consistent with the usual proceedings of the House, and the fair claim of the other candidate, the motion could not possibly be acceded to.

Mr. *Sheridan* observed, that the right hon. gent. seemed also to be a wandering light, and not a fixed star; for had he been in his place yesterday, he would have known that a regular notice had been duly given of his present motion. Mr. *Sheridan* re-stated, and persisted in his arguments in favour of the motion.

Mr. *Burroughs* differed in opinion with Mr. *Sheridan*, and thought it unfair that the business should be brought forward in the absence of Mr. *Huskisson*.

Mr. *Bragge* was also of opinion, that the order for taking Mr. *Huskisson's* petition into consideration on the 9th of April could not be withdrawn.—After a few words from Mr. *Sheridan*, who declared he did not know that Mr. *Huskisson* was out of town, the question was put on his motion, and it was negatived.

[*LORD HOOD'S CLAIM.*] The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* moved the order of the day for the House to resolve itself into a committee of supply, and that the papers respecting Lord *Hood's* claims relative to the captures at Toulon, should be referred to the said committee, which was ordered. The House having resolved itself into a committee, the right hon. gent. said, he had to call the attention of the committee to a subject, which he could not help thinking required all that indulgence and liberality which they were always accustomed to shew to the exertions of the British navy, a subject which connected itself with one of the most splendid exertions of our navy, during the last war, and related to officers and seamen as meritorious as any in the British service. It was impossible that any one could doubt the merit of the service performed by Lord *Hood* at Toulon. The present subject affected the interests of Lord *Hood*, Lord *Keith*, Lord *Radstock*, and other distinguished officers, and of all the officers and seamen under the command of Lord *Hood*, upon that

occasion, who were now living, and the families of those who were deceased, all were involved in the consideration of the subject, which he felt it incumbent upon him to submit to the committee. It was not his intention to go into any particular detail with respect to the surrender of Toulon; it would be recollected that the inhabitants of the southern part of France, weary of the worst of tyranny that ever degraded the human race, expressed a wish to be placed under the authority of the legitimate heir of their murdered sovereign. In consequence of this, Lord Hood became possessed of the town and harbour of Toulon, and several French ships, which, by a convention, were to be held, in part, for Louis XVII, to whom they were to be restored. During the continuance of the war, it was obvious that the nature of the terms agreed upon, precluded Lord Hood from claiming any remuneration for himself and the officers and seamen under his command. After the ratification of the definitive treaty of peace, Lord Hood presented a memorial to his Majesty, claiming a reward for the officers and seamen, on account of the French ships destroyed and taken possession of at Toulon, together with their ordnance and stores. His Majesty was pleased to refer the memorial to the Privy Council, a committee of whom took it into consideration. It was the opinion of that committee, that it was not expedient to grant any remuneration for the ten sail of the line, and other vessels which were destroyed, because it was not the practice to grant remuneration for ships destroyed at sea, it was only when they were captured, that the captors became entitled to prize-money, head-money, &c. The committee of Privy Council however recommended that a remuneration should be given for those ships which were brought away from Toulon, and afterwards employed in his Majesty's service. It was then referred to the Lords of the Admiralty, and to the Master General of the Ordnance, to report the value of those ships, and of the ordnance and stores taken in them. The Lords of the Admiralty reported the value of the ships at 236,742*l.*, and the value of the ordnance and stores at 28,594*l.* 14*s.* 10½*d.* On these reports being received, the Committee of Council recommended the granting of a remuneration to Lord Hood, which was approved of by his Majesty in council, and it was upon this recommendation approved of by

his Majesty, that he submitted the proposition for remuneration to the committee. In considering this subject, let it be remembered, that in this instance, the officers and seamen of his Majesty's navy had been favoured in a similar manner to that now proposed. At the Helder several Dutch ships were taken possession of by Admiral Mitchell, in the name of the Stadtholder; and without detracting from the merit of that service, would any man say that the service performed by Lord Hood at Toulon, did not establish at least an equal claim to the gratitude of the country? The ships taken at the Helder, were libelled in the Court of Admiralty, but never condemned; the ships taken by Lord Hood, at Toulon, had not been libelled; but, would any man say, that if they had, they might not have been condemned. The distinction, however, was immaterial. The value was given for the ships taken at the Helder. The two other instances were, the ships destroyed by Lord Nelson at Aboukir and those destroyed and taken at Copenhagen, in both which compensation was given. He only asked that the House would not, in this instance, take advantage of the want of condemnation, and that they would give the officers and seamen employed at Toulon the value of those ships which they had taken, and which had been employed in his Majesty's service. It might be asked, if the claim he now made was so just, how it happened that it was not brought forward sooner? From the nature of the terms agreed upon with respect to the ships taken possession of, it was evident it could not be brought forward during the war. Afterwards, some time was taken up in the consideration of the subject. The reports of the Board of Admiralty and Ordnance were made on the 31st of March, and the 1st of April, last year. There was no necessity to recal to the recollection of gent. how much govt. and parliament had been employed from the 1st of April to the end of the last session. On the 31st of August the Privy Council finally recommended the remuneration, and it was approved of by his Majesty. He did not think it proper to bring forward a subject of such importance in the present session previous to the Christmas recess, when the attendance was thin, and afterwards it had been delayed from obvious reasons. He wished, however, that whatever blame might be attached to the delay, it might be

wholly imputed to him, and that it might not be suffered to injure the cause of Lord Hood, or the officers and seamen who were under his command, and who, he trusted, would experience that attention and indulgence which the House were always disposed to shew to British officers and British seamen. He concluded by moving that a sum not exceeding 265,336*l.* be granted to his Majesty, to be distributed to the officers and seamen under the command of Lord Hood at the capture of Toulon, being the estimated value of the ships and vessels taken possession of upon that occasion, and the ordnance and stores on board them.

Mr. *Pierrepoint* bore testimony to the excellent character left behind them at Toulon by Lord Hood, Lord Hotham, and the other Officers serving there. Had any of them fallen in that affair, the House would not have hesitated to have voted them a monument; and with respect to those who survived, let it not be said, that when living, you denied them bread, to whom, if dead, you would have given a stone.

Mr. *George Johnstone* felt it a painful task to oppose a motion like the present, where personal feelings were interested, and especially the feelings of persons who had so signally deserved of their country. There was a distinction to be taken in the present question, it was intended to decide on the interest, not on the honour of the persons concerned. But to make it plain and distinct, it was only necessary to determine it was a question of right; or to examine whether it came before the House as a case of liberality? Perhaps the right hon. gent. intended to make it assume both aspects. For his arguments appealed at one time to the liberality, at another to the justice of the House. It was true, indeed, that in such cases, it seldom happened that the liberality of the House was appealed to in vain.—If, however, the House was to decide according to strict justice, the question before them would simply be, whether the capture, or the possession rather, of the ships at Toulon, was prize or no prize? This might be collected from attention to the circumstances under which they came into our power; but he was not willing to enter into a detail of the particulars which accompanied the transaction. It was enough to state, that the ships came into our possession in consequence of a convention. Then we

did not take possession of them by capture, but by virtue of a treaty. When the condition on which they came into our possession could not be fulfilled, the power to dispose of them then devolved on his Majesty, not on those who merely took possession of them. The only case which the right hon. gent. thought strictly in point with the present, was that of the capture at the Helder. But between these two cases, in his mind, there was no just analogy. In the Helder case we took forcible possession of the ships: they attempted to remove from our attack, but we followed them, and stood close in with them in array of battle. In corroboration of this assertion, the hon. gent. read to the House several passages of the Dutch Admiral's answer to the summons of our Admiral calling on him to hoist the Orange flag. They confessed themselves to be, and were in reality, made prisoners of war. Where then was the analogy between the two cases? at Toulon the whole business was done by a convention. The right hon. gent. says, the ships were libelled in the Court of Admiralty: if so, the question may be simply decided on that point. Let it be determined under the prize act whose property they are, and if they are declared to be that of Lord Hood, he should not hesitate a moment in acceding to the motion. The prizes at the Helder were adjudged by a legal decision. But was 236,000*l.* a trifling sum under the present impaired and labouring state of our finances; or if such a sum is thus to be voted away in the present situation of the country, are not the land forces who co-operated with the fleet in that service, entitled to their share of the reward? It was unfair to acknowledge the right of the one, without attending to the claims of the other.—But if the right existed, no one would more cheerfully concur in the vote than himself. But let it be submitted to the decision of the learned gent. opposite him (Sir William Scott); it was for him to declare whether they were prize or not, and by that proper decision he should abide; if there was no right, why vote away a sum of so large an amount. It was incompatible with that system of economy which the right hon. gent. seemed anxious to pursue and, for which he gave him the greater credit as a contrary lesson had been taught him by his predecessor. But again, he had only to repeat, let the question be tried

before the proper tribunal: let the ships be declared prize or no prize, and then, the question might easily be decided.

Sir Home Popham.—Sir; the question before the Committee, on which I did not expect any difference of opinion, is so intimately connected with the profession to which I have the honour of belonging, that I cannot resist offering a few remarks on the subject, especially as neither the right hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or the hon. gent. who spoke last have fairly and correctly stated the case with respect to this point; whether the French fleet was delivered over to the noble and gallant Admiral, or whether it was taken possession of by a military operation. That the operation might have been combined I have no doubt, and that intercourse might have been had with some of the factious in Toulon, is also very probable, but the predominant feature was certainly military. On the 23d of August Lord Hood appeared off Toulon with 14 sail of the line, where he found Admiral St. Julien (a creature of the Republic) in command of the French fleet of seventeen sail of the line, and who had suspended Admiral Trogoffe from all his functions and command, and consequently all the expected co-operation on the part of Trogoffe was at an end, and the gallant admiral decided to attack the French fleet in the formidable position in which it was moored; and like a great general (having long established his character as a great admiral) he disembarked the part of the army serving in his fleet with the marines, and took possession of Fort La Malgue. After this was achieved, did he not send a flag of truce to St. Julien, the French admiral, and make a disposition to attack his fleet at anchor from the batteries of La Malgue and the co-operation of the British fleet? These preparations, and the name of the noble admiral, and the recollection of the victories that composed its glory, had the greatest effect on St. Julien; the British admiral's conduct at Basse Terre, where he manœuvred the French admiral De Grasse from his anchorage, and took possession of it, was fresh in St. Julien's memory, he knew he had to contend with a man who had been in the habits of turning his countrymen out of their roadsteads, and taking possession of them; and that the same military talent might be applied here. Shall we, says St. Julien to his partizans, give another opportunity of adding new laurels to

the English flag, and increasing the disgrace of France. No! Let us retire, let us join the army of Carteaux, rather than risk the issue of a battle. These were the motives which induced St. Julien to desert his fleet, accompanied with the crews of seven ships most attached to him, at the very moment the British admiral was about to enter to attack him. Can this then be called a convention? No! there was no condition, no convention between the contending commanders. And even in this, as well as after Lord Hood entered Toulon, he was seen to act not only as a gallant naval officers, but also as a great general, and consummate statesman; and then whether the fleet surrendered, or was taken in trust for Louis XVI. the operation to all intents and purposes must be considered as a military operation, and is entitled to the highest praise. It was difficult to say upon what ground a claim so well founded, could be objected. If the idea is to go abroad that the liberality of the House will not show itself to signal services at the recommendation of his Majesty, what discouraging effects may it not produce? Even at this moment, when Lord Nelson is blockading that same port of Toulon; when perhaps he is on the eve of capturing the French Fleet either by valour or negociation, is it to be held out that for such services as these there is to be no reward, because they may be said to be achieved by a convention. I contend that Lord Hood's conduct throughout the whole of this business, evinced the highest sense of honour, and the most refined delicacy.—The question, in my opinion, is of the first importance, and I recommend it to the serious consideration of the House, and warn them how they permit either sophistry, or a mere quibble of the law to frustrate the claims of acknowledged merits to the strongest proofs of their liberality. Aware of the great, and interesting business now standing in succession in the order of the day, I shall not trouble the committee further, and earnestly hope the remuneration recommended by his Majesty in Council will be voted without another dissentient voice.

Mr. Creevey considered this motion to involve a question more proper for the Admiralty Court to decide upon than that House; and as he knew nothing more dangerous than any interference on the part of the House with whatever belonged to the jurisdiction of the courts of law, he should

therefore conceive it his duty to oppose the motion.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* explained what he had said with respect to the original capture of those ships. He admitted that there was something in the character of a convention about it, but not such an one as that attributed to it by the learned gent. on the other side. He denied that he had ever pressed this motion as a claim of right. He urged it as an appeal to the liberality of the House: and he confessed that he felt it to be an appeal to something more than liberality, considering all the circumstances, although he had relied on that principally, and he was persuaded it was that to which a deserving British officer could never apply in vain. When the peculiar nature of this case was candidly viewed; when the time which those ships had been in use, and the benefit resulting therefrom to the country was considered, he trusted that no difference of opinion could arise as to the propriety of granting to those gallant officers a full equivalent, particularly as it must be recollected that the application was not new in principle, but recognized by the cases to which he had already referred; cases which he contended were analogous to that before the committee.

Dr. Lawrence wished it to be distinctly understood, that liberality was the only ground upon which this proposition rested and, in such a case, he certainly was not disposed to be a niggardly remunerator to any of those gallant men who formed the pride and glory of the country. The learned gent. took notice of the remarks of the hon. admiral (*Sir H. Popham*) that we should accede to the motion before the committee, lest the rejection of it should damp the zeal of our fleets particularly that now probably before Toulon. For himself, he felt no apprehension on that score. Whatever might be the result of the present motion, he knew the gallant and disinterested character of our navy too well to suppose that any consideration of gain could stimulate them, or any apprehension of loss could restrain them, from the utmost exertion of their duty. He recommended that further time should be taken fully to examine the nature of this question, before the motion should be adopted; and that a motion of this nature should be preceded by a resolution of the House as to the fact of the merit of the force to whom the proposed reward was to be

given. He concluded with acknowledging the conduct of Ministers, in thus submitting the measure to the consideration of the House, to be nothing more than a performance of their duty, but deprecated any hasty decision.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that the learned gent. had done ministers nothing more than justice in stating that they had brought this motion forward from a sense of duty. As to the distinction made between the grounds of right and liberality, the proposition of this claim to Parliament, was itself a proof that it was not conceived to rest upon the ground of right; for if it was, no such application need have been made. Neither of the cases referred to, namely, those of the *Helder* and *Copenhagen* were brought before Parliament. The right of his Majesty to grant a remuneration for those ships was not doubted; but yet from the amount of the present claim, and from the time which had gone by since the expedition to Toulon, referred to in the motion, an application to Parliament was deemed the proper mode of proceeding.

Sir Home Popham, in allusion to the notice taken of his sentiments by the learned gent. on the lower bench, said, that, perhaps in his anxiety for the adoption of the motion before the House, he might have used expressions too strong; but yet he hoped it was not supposed that he could be capable of thinking a British seaman would be influenced by such motives as the learned gent. had inferred from those expressions.

Dr. Lawrence said, he had only animadverted on the sentiments referred to by the hon. admiral, in order to have it disclaimed.

Mr. William Smith thought, that whenever a British House of Commons was called upon to vote away such a sum, their disposition to investigate the reasons on which they were so called, ought not to be counteracted by the expectation of any other discussion. The matter itself was of sufficient importance. If he was to consult merely what, generally speaking, was due to the glorious exertions of the navy, if he were to consult his own feelings for many in that service with whom he was connected, he should not feel a moment's doubt as to the voting of the money, and indeed, he had come down to the House with a disposition to do so; but he must confess, that what he had al-

ready heard in the course of this debate, had made a considerable change in his mind. He did not incline to think, that the gallant officer had put the business on its proper ground. He rather leaned to the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that this was not a question of right, but one of liberality. Now this was a very good reason for a little longer time for inquiry. The quantum of the remuneration would depend upon the danger, the importance and the brilliancy of the exploit. Then again the gallant officer had admitted that the army were concerned in the business. No one could possibly praise the exertions of the British navy too much; no one could possibly feel disposed to praise them more highly than himself; but surely if the army were employed in that transaction, we ought not to reward one branch of service alone unless any considerable reasons were given for it. The papers might have laid on the table ever since last Jan. but that mere circumstance did not suppose every individual member to be acquainted with them. It was not so material to know when the papers were first laid on the table, as when the notice was first given which was but one or two days back, but that, in affairs of importance, was not time enough. He thought there were grounds sufficient to lead to a further examination of the subject, and for that purpose to a little delay, which, he hoped, would not be productive of any ill consequences to any of the parties. At the same time, he begged to say, that he was sorry to feel it a duty to interpose any further delay between the generosity of the public, and the convenience of those who had served it. The length of time that had elapsed might have almost exhausted them, and "hope deferred," might make "the heart sick."

Admiral *Berkeley* said, that the soldiers on board Lord Hood's fleet at the time the French ships were taken possession of, were unquestionably entitled to their share of this prize money, but none of the troops which arrived at Toulon subsequent to that transaction.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* thought that there was no doubt that soldiers in the situation on board described by the hon. admiral, would, in the distribution of the prize-money, be considered as marines.

Sir *William Scott* declined to give any opinion upon the general question impli-

cated in this motion, as it came to be decided upon by him in other circumstances: but with respect to the subject alluded to by his right hon. friend who spoke last, he stated that soldiers serving on board the fleets were entitled to their share of prize-money as marines.

Mr. *Kinnaird* considered this a question of much importance. He would ask, whether, if the Bourbon family should be restored to the throne of France, this House might not be again called upon to give a remuneration for those ships. He thought such a claim in such an event not improbable, and for that and other reasons stated, he would oppose the motion, and move the previous question. This motion was considered irregular in a committee.

Mr. *Johnstone* observed that Lord Mulgrave was at Toulon, and asked if it was intended in the proposed distribution of this prize-money, that his lordship should share as a marine? The hon. member said, that he understood there were 4 regiments of land forces at Toulon, who were entitled to their proportion of this remuneration.

Admiral *Berkeley* said, there were only 2 regiments serving as marines.

Sir *Charles Pole* observed, that the force which was at Toulon under gen. O'Hara, arrived after the ships were captured, and therefore had no claim to any of this money proposed to be voted.

Mr. *Windham* thought the result of all the discussion was this, that the House could not now come to any decision upon the subject, and considering this question exceedingly complicated, he wished that further time should be allowed to examine its details; so fully persuaded was he of the necessity for such time, that if any hon. member would move the chairman should leave the chair, he would support him.

Mr. *Kinnaird* rose, and moved that the chairman should leave the Chair.—This motion was negatived without a division, and the original motion was carried. The House resumed, and the report was ordered to be received to-morrow.

[*IRISH MILITIA OFFER BILL.*]—Mr. Secretary *Yorke* moved the consideration of his Majesty's message, relative to the offers made by several regiments of Irish militia to extend their services to this country.

Sir *Francis Burdett* said, he did not

mean to oppose the motion; but this was a subject of very great importance at any time, and more so at the present; it was a subject that was likely to involve principles that must naturally excite the jealousy of those who were attached to the constitution. He would not take up more of the time of the House at present, as he did not know what measures ministers meant to found upon this message, but he could not help expressing the jealousy he felt upon the subject.

Mr. *Fuller* said, that if gentlemen had any objections to state to this measure, they ought to state them at once; but if they did not know what the measures to be proposed were, it would be as well to wait till they did, before they expressed their objections. — The order of the day was then read, and the Speaker having read his Majesty's Message,

Mr. Secretary *Yorke* rose, and addressed the House to the following effect.—Sir; in calling the attention of the House to the message of his Majesty, which has been just read, I conceive that there can exist very little doubt of the general concurrence of the House in carrying to the foot of the Throne their unanimous expressions of joy and satisfaction at the communication which has been made, and of this additional proof of the zeal and loyalty of the Irish militia. I should conceive, Sir that there can hardly be any person in the House who can find any difficulty in expressing his concurrence and warm approbation at this generous and spontaneous return on the part of the militia of Ireland, for an equally generous and spontaneous effort which was made on a former occasion by the militia of England, who offered their services to go to Ireland, at a time when that country was in a state of considerable danger. But, as his Majesty's message applies only to a part of the measures that are under the consideration of govt. for augmenting the disposable part of our military force, I hope I shall be excused if I advert shortly to other subjects which form a part of that general plan. Before I proceed to state those points, I think it may be material to recal the recollection of the House to the present state of our military force, because although it has been stated on former occasions in a general way, yet it has never been stated in that distinct and detailed manner which was necessary to make a proper impression upon the House. After having stated the

present state of our military force, I shall take a short comparative view of our military force at two former periods, viz. in Oct. 1801, when the preliminaries of the peace were signed, and in April 1803, immediately after his Majesty's message. The total of the regular force on the 1st of this month, including cavalry, infantry, and militia, amounted to 252,841 men; this body consisted in round numbers of 20,324 regular cavalry, 133,260 regular infantry, and 99,257 militia. The number of the artillery at the same period amounted to 14,202 men, making altogether the actual state of our force on the 1st of this month 267,043 men. Now, with respect to the comparative view which I proposed to take of our force at two former periods; on the 1st of Oct. 1801, the effective strength of the army amounted to 266,800 men; the artillery to 12,287, making together above 279,000 men; consequently, taking the whole of our force together, and comparing them at those two periods, viz., Oct. 1801, and March 1804, it will be found that our force, now that we have only been engaged about ten months in war, is within 13 or 14,000 men of the amount of the army, at the close of a war which lasted nine years. The number of cavalry in Oct. 1801, was 26,350; but it should be recollected, that the cavalry is a force that cannot be raised so quickly as infantry, and that the number of our cavalry was thought at that time by many gent. to be greater than was necessary.—I have now, Sir, stated very shortly, but very accurately, the comparative strength of our military force at the two periods to which I have alluded, and having done so, I will leave it to the fair and unprejudiced determination of any man, whether there are any grounds for those charges which some gent. are so constantly in the habit of throwing out, of the want of exertion on the part of his Majesty's ministers, and of the neglect of the military force of the country.—Now, Sir, with regard to our force in April, 1803, immediately previous to the rupture with France: it amounted at that time in Great Britain and Ireland to 124,843 men. Now, Sir, I will state the distribution of our force at the two periods to which I have alluded. The total force in Great Britain and Ireland in Oct. 1801, including militia, was 170,426 men; in April, 1803, 124,843, and in March, 1800, 199,993 men; which

is near 30,000 men more in Great Britain and Ireland than there was at the close of the last war, and near 60,000 men more than there was in April last, immediately before the commencement of the war. But there is another view in which I wish the House to consider this subject, that is to say, the difference of the numbers of the regular troops at the different periods. By regular troops, I do not mean only troops disposable for foreign service. The number of regular troops in Ireland in October, 1801, was 12,220 men; at present there are in Ireland 28,870 regular infantry, which form 30 battalions of as fine and as well-disciplined troops as this country ever possessed. It may be said that the danger in the former war was not so great as that with which we were now threatened, but I will venture to say that there were many periods of the last war, and particularly at the time of the Northern confederacy, when the danger was greater (I will not say than it is now, because we are fully prepared, but was greater) than it was some months ago. Without occupying the House longer upon this subject, I may venture to say, that as far as the defence of this country is concerned, particularly if the number of volunteers is considered, it requires no extraordinary degree of courage not to feel much alarm at any threatened attack of the enemy. That no degree of exertion has been wanting on the part of the executive govt. is, I think, clearly proved, if the number of men be considered that have been raised during the present war. The total number of men raised for the public service, for the regulars, militia, army of reserve, and seamen, since the commencement of the war, is 192,606 men; and it ought also to be recollected, that this force was raised at a time when provisions were cheap, when the manufactures were flourishing, and, consequently, when there were not such strong inducements to men to enter into the army or navy. When all these circumstances are taken into consideration, let any man judge whether ministers have or have not made any exertions. I take no credit to myself and my colleagues for these exertions, because in making them, we have only done our duty. But I wish to have this point considered as established, that as far as relates to our defensive force, there is no reason to repine at what has been done. — This point being established with regard to our

defensive force, the next question is, whether we have a sufficient offensive and disposable force? I am of opinion that we ought not to confine ourselves to mere measures of defence, but that we ought to look forward to what may happen in the course of the war. Suppose, in some happy day, the continent of Europe should endeavour to rescue itself from that yoke of iron bondage in which it is placed, and which has levelled kings and governments in the dust, it must be admitted that it would be desirable that this country should avail itself of such an opportunity if it occurred; but even if it should not, this country by itself may have an opportunity of reducing the enemy to reason, of convincing him that we are more powerful than he supposes us to be, and that we are more than able to contend single-handed against him. Upon these grounds, I think it would be advisable to augment our disposable force, and such an augmentation had been determined upon by his Majesty's govt.; it had not yet been put into execution, but it was ready to be done to such an extent as might be deemed proper. The augmentation which had been already ordered, extended to the cavalry and to the foot guards; the increase in the cavalry was about 3,500, and the foot guards above 2,000. In addition to this, it is proposed to raise 8 new regiments of 1,000 men each, and 10 new battalions of 1,000 men also each, to be added to 10 of the strongest of the old regiments: and this augmentation was to be connected with an augmentation which was to be made to the foreign troops in our service. It is perfectly well known, that there was in the last war, a very large body of foreign troops in our service; and it must be equally obvious that there are greater difficulties in recruiting that species of force now, than there was in the last war. The foreign troops now in our service he would take at 8,000 men; and in addition to this was to be considered the levies now making in our American and West Indian possessions, which I should estimate at 4,000 men. If the House should concur in the propriety of this addition to our regular force, then the next question to be considered is, 1st, by what direct medium you can effect and encourage that augmentation; and 2d, what collateral means you can use in the attainment of that object. With regard to the first of these points, I hope that the House will not be dissatisfied with me if I do not propose any radical change in the construction of

the army, if I do not now enter into the consideration of the question, whether it would or would not be right to introduce the principle of limited service into our army? I by no means wish to contend, that this is not a question very well deserving of consideration; it is one which I have considered, and upon which I have formed my opinion, and whenever the subject is fairly taken up, I have no objection to state it, but I am sure it is a subject which the House would not listen to, unless it had been previously considered by the military part of the administration. It is a subject that not only requires great consideration, but even, if it should be adopted, requires a great deal of time to carry into effect. It has been adopted in the Austrian service, that is to say, the principle was adopted immediately after the treaty of Luneville, but it was determined that it should not take effect till 1804. But I am sure I need not state the material difference that subsists between the Austrian service and ours; the Troops of Austria are all concentrated within her own continental dominions, and are not spread, as the troops of G. Britain necessarily are, over distant continental possessions. With regard, then, to the direct means that we ought to adopt for encouraging and effecting this augmentation, my opinion is, after the best consideration I can give the subject, that the best way would be to remove all competition with the recruiting service, and to put a stop to all great bounties, which were not only a great grievance, by obstructing the recruiting service, but encouraged desertion. This may be considered as a great admission on the part of Ministers, and as an acknowledgment of the justice of the reasoning which some gent. have always made use of. But I cannot consider the question in that point of view, I think the measures adopted by ministers last year were right, but the question is, whether these measures are necessary now? But, if I am right in my opinion, that this competition ought to be stopped, the next question is, whence does this competition arise? It arose from the militia and from the army of reserve. With regard to the militia, the competition certainly was very great last year, because the whole militia was to be raised; but now the militia was very nearly complete, for there did not want to complete the English militia 5,000 men, and the Irish was complete within 150. The 5,000 men necessary to complete the militia, will

not, I am sure, be considered as forming any thing like a competition with the army in a country of such extent as this, and containing such a number of fighting men as we know by the official returns it contains; such a competition is hardly worth noticing. We then come to the army of reserve. Though I still maintain my opinion, that the army of reserve bills were salutary and useful, yet now as they have, in a great measure, had the effect which was expected from them, it becomes necessary to consider whether their operation should be any longer continued. The bill to which I allude passed on the 6th of July last; on the 20th of Aug. there were raised under that bill 15,905 men; on the 24th of Sept. they amounted to 24,701; and in the month of Nov. last to 25,489 men. I will ask any man in this House to tell me, by what other means a similar body of men could have been raised in so short a time? The total number of men in G. Britain and Ireland, raised under the army of reserve bill, was 36,845 men, of whom no less than 10,646 had entered for general service into the regiments of the line. During the time these men were raising, I admit that the recruiting for the army has not increased; but, on the other hand, I contend it has not diminished, notwithstanding all this competition. I am also ready to admit, that for the last 2 or 3 months, the army of reserve has scarcely maintained itself; that is to say, the number of recruits have been fully balanced by the number of deserters; for I am sorry to say, that the practice of desertion has got to a very great pitch in the neighbourhood of the metropolis; and this has been very much increased by the very high bounties that have been given, and at the same time the practice of crimping has increased. In order to remedy these evils, I would propose, as the most effectual means to attain that object, not to repeal the army of reserve bills, but to suspend them for a limited time; and with regard to those counties which have not furnished their regular quota of men, I would propose that they should pay a pecuniary compensation according to the number of men they were deficient. This cannot be considered as unjust, because those counties are now subject to very heavy fines for not having completed their number of men. This is one of the measures which I mean to propose, and I think the army of reserve bills should be postponed in

Ireland, as well as in G. Britain. If the House should think proper to adopt this proposition, it would have the immediate effect of destroying all competition, and consequently of reducing the great bounties. It would also, I think, put an end to the practice of crimping, and prevent desertion. With regard to the other means which I propose to adopt, it is now not necessary to enter into any detail upon the subject; by the plan I have proposed, the whole recruiting service will be thrown into the hands of the army, and in that case they will have an opportunity of regulating the bounties. With regard to bounties, it is the opinion of the most experienced officers I have conversed with, that these high bounties are by no means necessary; it is sufficient if they are liberal, but the great point is, that they should be fixed and certain; it is now proposed that they should not exceed 10 guineas. This certainly is a mere military question, and it is upon the opinion of the most experienced military men that I have conversed with, that I have formed my own. I think also, that some means should be taken to recruit the army of reserve out of those who are not fit for foreign service, or who do not choose to engage for it. With regard to the collateral means; the first is that which is recommended in the King's message; for by bringing over 10,000 of the Irish militia to this country, it will enable us to set at liberty 10,000 of our troops, and to render them disposable for foreign service. But in order to prevent any defalcation in the Irish establishment, I mean to propose that the Irish militia, which now only consists of 18,000 men, should be carried to the point at which they were last war, that is to say 28,000 men. I should therefore propose, in the first instance, to move for an address to his Majesty, in the terms to which I alluded in the commencement of my speech: I should then move for leave to bring in a bill, to enable his Majesty to accept this offer of service from the Irish militia; next, I should propose to bring in a bill for augmenting the Irish militia; and, lastly, I should propose to bring in a bill for suspending the army of reserve bill for one year. I am not aware that there is any thing more with which it is necessary for me to trouble the House, except only upon one point which I omitted to mention before, but which ought by no means to be lost sight of, I mean the

state of the volunteer force. By the latest returns I have seen, after critical inspection, the number of men, effectual and present, was, of cavalry 27,000, artillery 4,000, and infantry 300,000; these were not men upon paper, but effective and present. The cavalry were all, of course, completely armed, the infantry in all the maritime counties were also armed, as were the greater part of those in the interior counties. I think I can venture to say, that of the volunteer infantry 250,000 are completely armed, and, from the great exertions that are making, I am sure the remainder will in a very short time have their muskets; and, in case of any sudden emergency, they might be armed with pikes, great numbers of which have been issued out. Whatever gents. may say of this volunteer force, I contend that a large proportion of them are as well disciplined as the militia were at the commencement of the last war; and it would be but candid, if gents. when they spoke of the volunteers, would recollect that they were in a very different state from that in which they were 5 or 6 months ago; but it has been the constant fashion to represent them as if they were no farther advanced in discipline than they were when they were first embodied. In addition to this force, there are 25,000 sea fencibles, who would, I have no doubt, prove themselves of the greatest service, if ever the enemy should make an attempt at invading this country with their boasted flotilla.—The right hon. gent. concluded with moving the address. The address having been read from the chair,

Mr. Pitt rose and said—I do not rise, Sir, to trouble the House with any discussion at present; the subject is indeed well deserving the attention of the House; but the more proper period for discussing it will be when the different topics enlarged upon by the right hon. gent. to-night shall be brought forward in the shape of bills, when I shall take an opportunity of delivering my sentiments more at large. To this address I concur in common with the House, and all those who recollect with pleasure the cordiality and zeal of the militia of this country, who set to those of Ireland an example which has excited their emulation, and which they now, so much to their honour, imitate: this is a subject on which there can be no difference of opinion, but in which we must all feel equal delight. I do not think this an oc-

casion on which it is necessary to enter at all into any discussion of the very interesting and important topics with which the right hon. gent. prefaced his motion for this address. I beg leave to say, that having expressed myself, in the course of the subject now under our discussion, dissatisfied, in many respects, as to the state of the military defence, and not being able to relieve my mind upon the whole of that subject, I must repeat that I retain the same sentiments still. I will, however, freely own, that I am, in many respects, satisfied with what I have heard to-night; I must, however, declare also, that whenever I have ventured to trouble the House upon this subject, I never differed from the right hon. gent. in one proposition which his speech to-night proved, namely, that as far as numbers go, there is no subject of blame to be attached any where; it has never been contested by me, that the numbers raised in the course of the present war are not abundantly sufficient to meet any view which any reasonable person can entertain of the necessity for our defence. How far, in the raising such numbers, merit is to be allowed to his Majesty's government—how much they have done to procure the proper means to improve such numbers, and render them efficient by discipline—how much encouragement has been held out to some descriptions of persons composing a part of those numbers—how far ministers have proceeded to give to the country the benefit it might have had in proportion to such numbers raised by active exertions and prudent policy, are questions which are not necessarily to be mixed in this debate. I shall not introduce any topics of that nature at present; whatever share govt. may have had in producing these numbers of men for the general defence of the country, the ardour, the zeal, and the energy of the country, is manifested more than even the numbers can convey; and this affords to us the best pledge for our security in the hour of attack, and consciousness of invincible strength in the hour of danger; a security, indeed, against any danger by which this country may be threatened, and an assurance of triumph over any difficulty with which we may have to contend. But there is another point which cannot be cured by zeal, and that is, whether the energy of the persons thus raised has been well directed? Whether they have been brought forward and

improved in discipline, so as to render their natural force more serviceable, and made most available to the security of their country? That is a point involving matters which it may be extremely interesting and highly important to discuss hereafter at a convenient opportunity; but I will not introduce these topics into discussion, to embarrass the subject of the present day; I shall leave them to subsequent occasions, of which there will be many when the bills come before us; but while I say I feel some satisfaction from what I heard to-night from the right hon. gent., I mean that my satisfaction arises chiefly from the amount of our force called into activity for our service, and the zeal and energy which the country has manifested for that purpose. In no part of the country do I apprehend any deficiency in zeal and energy; and with the magnitude of our force, in a collective sense, I am satisfied.—On none of these points have I any anxiety; but on the subject of rightly improving such force by discipline, and rendering it more and more efficient for its purpose, have I day after day expressed my anxiety in this House; and this is the great point on which I wish the public may never have reason to regret that more has not been done early in this case. Upon that matter I only throw out this as a hint, for at present I shall say no more upon it; neither will I enter minutely into other matters at this moment. I would just observe in passing, that with respect to the militia, I am of opinion, care should be taken that it be not made use of in a way that may impede the progress of the regular army, or any other disciplined force; and unless I shall see occasion to change my opinion, I shall have to state more at large my sentiments upon this subject hereafter, and to submit, that under the present circumstances of the country, it will be desirable, as vacancies shall occur, that they shall be filled up in a different mode than has been hitherto adopted; and if they are raised by ballot as formerly, yet that they shall soon be put in a state in which, when trained, they may be at liberty to enlist as much as they choose, as men do from the militia, and also from the army of reserve, into the regular service. I enter as strongly as the right hon. gent. himself can do into the propriety of preventing as much as possible the competition of the services, that of raising men for the militia and the

army of reserve, interfering with the recruiting of the regular army. I enter also into the spirit, and feel the absolute necessity of a measure that may crush the abominable practice of crimping. I wish very much to see some measure adopted, to relieve the country from the great weight and pressure of those high and enormous bounties, which now have been too long given for men in the militia and the army of reserve, which has, in addition to this evil, another of considerable magnitude attached to it, that of temptation to desertion; but I doubt very much whether you will not prevent a great deal of progress in the service, if you do not only allow persons from all services to enlist as they choose into the regular service, but also supply the vacancy in some manner like that which is now done in the army of reserve, and rendering that a species of vehicle, by which to convey men who are trained and disciplined into the regular service. I throw this out as a mere hint for consideration, before the progress of the army of reserve is suspended. The right hon. gent. has not entered into any detail of the mode by which he means to raise the men; if he can raise as many new regiments and battalions as may be wanted, by direct recruiting at moderate bounties, without having the circumstance of undue grants in consequence of it, I shall be glad. If there be reasonable hopes of such a plan, I should wish it to be tried, and should most heartily wish it success. I do not say how far it may or may not be advantageous to the country to adopt a total suspension of the army of reserve for a while; but I am strongly of opinion, that with a view to the successful augmentation of the army, and the keeping it up effectually in time of war, it must be done by some measure that has at least the effect of keeping down bounties, and that can never be accomplished until the present competition in the services shall have been abolished. I think, however, that you cannot have the men with the same promptness, nor under the same discipline, without a measure somewhat partaking of the character of your army of reserve, and that will operate in different parts of the counties more directly than any other. Some regulations with regard to substitutes, and to confine the bounties within a moderate compass, will, I believe, be found more effectual than any

other mode. I think, however, that to supply the army in this way, will be found a more effectual mode than that of the ordinary progress of recruiting for the army in the first instance; for I have been told by many men of experience, and I have found by my own, that men, as, indeed, it is natural we should expect, without experience, are more ready to enter into that species of service which is limited in extent and duration, which is the nature of the army of reserve, than into that of a general service, which has no limits of time or place. This we all experienced in the course of the last war in the militia. We have already found in this war, that men have been ready to enter into the army of reserve, independent of the bounty, on account of the service being limited in point of time; and we have found, that when men come together, and after they have acquired military habits, they take inclination from each other, and are tempted by a natural spirit of courage and emulation among their comrades, to extend their services, and upon which they manifest a desire of going into the regular army, and therefore, I believe that as a matter of permanent policy, as well as that of a temporary purpose, or immediate effort, you will find it prudent, instead of giving up the system of the army of reserve, to retain something of its principle, and indeed, I collected from the speech we have just heard, it was not the intention of the right hon. gent. to give it up altogether, but only to suspend the provisions of it for a while. I should rather think it better to shape the plan of the army of reserve differently from what it is at present, and to attach to it afterwards, as much as you may, to the regular force, by uniting it, by means of moderate bounties, to the different battalions, as second regiments or battalions; for by this mode you will have all the advantages of local attachments, which men have, and the willingness they have to go together in almost every service; this will, in a considerable degree, be always the case where men are raised by districts, instead of being collected by a plan of general and indiscriminate recruiting; and the deficiency may be supplied by fresh ballot. I do not know whether I have not branched out further than was necessary to express my perfect acquiescence in the present address, reserving, as I do, the perfect and entire freedom

to speak on the different measures when they come before the House; I have not stated these sentiments or opinions in opposition to the motion now before the House, but I thought it necessary to throw out these ideas, lest it should be supposed, by my silence, that I had altered my opinion in some respects, in consequence of my seeming to acquiesce in all that has been stated by the right hon. gent. On the contrary, from what I have said now, I trust it appears to the House, that nothing which I have taken the liberty, on many former occasions, to recommend in our military system, has been in the least degree altered by any proposition which I have heard to-night.

Mr. *Windham*.—Sir; as there will be a considerable interval between the present period, and the final discussion of the subject now before the House, I shall not be under the necessity of detaining the House so long as I otherwise should, perhaps, feel it my duty to do; but it is necessary for me to observe, that although the right hon. gent. has gone into the whole measure at once, on a general statement of the matter which he is hereafter to propose, which may therefore be hereafter discussed; yet those who feel like myself, must be anxious not to appear to assent to all he states, and therefore I shall say a few words on the subject of the message from his Majesty, and the address proposed by the right hon. gent. There cannot be the least hesitation to assent to the first, and, indeed, what may be called the formal part of the address to his Majesty, which returns thanks to his Majesty for his gracious communication; as little objection can there be made to the acknowledgment of the zeal of the militia of Ireland, or of the people of that country in the common cause; but it remains for me and for those who think with me to say, that we are not prepared to adopt measures to carry into execution any particular plan, until we have had an opportunity of considering what that plan is. The first and leading objection I have to accepting the present offer of the Irish militia is, an objection to the principle of the thing, that is, because by it a body of men assembled for efficient military purposes, are to go beyond the terms of their original service. I do not say that no condition of things can do away this objection, because there may be a condition of things which will do away all objections

of whatever kind; but I say, that condition of things does not exist at this moment; and an objection it always will remain, let the condition of things be what it may; and the only question is, whether such a condition exists as to overrule that objection. I am of opinion, that in the present case, that condition has no such force at the present moment. I felt this objection strongly at the time the English militia made their offer to go to Ireland; and however useful, and perhaps decisive, that measure was upon the occasion to which it was applied, certainly that measure was not carried into effect without producing the inconveniences which I have alluded to, and which I took the liberty of stating at that time. I am confirmed, instead of being shaken, in the opinion I then entertained upon that subject; for indeed, the taking such a service as this, although offered, is nothing more than that which may, in some degree, be called a departure from good faith; it is not a breach of good faith, but it is a sort of misprision of good faith; for although the leading part of such a service as this may be voluntary, and the offer spontaneous, yet, as to the remainder, it may be absolutely compulsory. If a part of a large military body make the offer, how is the remainder to refuse it? You do not seem to know the possible, nor seem very clearly to see the probable consequences of such measures as these, for there are many evils attending them; one of these evils, besides the point which partakes of the nature of a breach of faith, is this; it has a very dangerous effect upon military discipline, especially upon such a force as that of a militia force: and, to illustrate this, I should like to ask gent. who went to Ireland with our militia, what passed as they were going there with their regiments; whether they did not hear some things that were utterly subversive of discipline? I would ask, whether the acceptance of such a service is not a species of suspension of discipline? Putting yourself into a situation to ask a favour of a military body of men (for a favour is this) cannot be said to be free from danger. It may be said, that this is only renewing what I formerly said; that may be true, and yet the observation may not have lost its force because it happens to have been an old one, and the object may be as good now as if it had never been before made; besides, I do

not see that Ireland is less in danger than G. Britain. When you say you let loose a part of your disposable force in this country, that is to say, that you have so far a power to employ as you please, the regular force which you could not otherwise detach, you must remember, that precisely to the same amount you must make fast your force in Ireland. I have by these measures pretty good testimony of the propriety of the opinions I have formerly given on these points. This asking favour where you ought only to command, this begging of them will have a bad effect; it will introduce among our military bodies a species of saturnalia which may be extremely dangerous; for which reasons, although I agree in the first part of the address, as I have stated already, yet I dissent from the latter part of it. I would really say no more for the present purpose, than that we should take the matter into our consideration, for I think we ought to reserve to ourselves the mode in which we shall proceed, at least until we have had some time to deliberate upon it, for we should not consider the question as a mere transfer of force from the one country to the other; but this question involves a consideration of increasing the militia force of Ireland, a force which is not raised, as in this country, by ballot; and this goes, like many other measures to which I and some others have been constantly objecting, to the prejudice of increasing the regular army, and in that view it is particularly objectionable to me. Many of the propositions of the right hon. gent. to-night I cannot oppose, without giving up a great number of opinions I have delivered on various former occasions in this House, and in which opinions I have been every day more and more convinced, as the subjects have been presented to my mind; such as that of the propriety of putting an end to the competition of the services by which bounties have been increased; the taking the matter of recruiting entirely into the hands of govt., instead of leaving individuals to vie with each other, and creating an expense so enormous and so burthensome. These and some other points stated to-night by the right hon. gent. are what I have stated several times, and a great while ago in this House. These, it seems, are now to be adopted, though then it seemed they were not mature, and were therefore rejected. It

seems as if reason to his Majesty's ministers was like fruit, not fit to eat in less than twelve months, for it is now that distance of time since they were offered; but at last they have been thought fit for the table of the right hon. gent. and so they have been to-night accordingly served up. Upon one point I would ask for information, whether the new regiments are to be raised by recurring to the old and ruinous system of recruiting for rank, and if so, whether ministers can hope for any power of legislation in such a case that will prevent a competition which must be most injurious in its effects? As to the point of the duration of the service in the regular army, I do not blame the right hon. gent. for not alluding to it sooner, for he had no measure that had a bearing upon it sooner; upon that subject I retain the opinion I have often delivered in this House. In a word, I agree with the right hon. gent. as to the propriety of reducing the enormous bounties we have so long heard of, and they cannot be reduced without taking away the competition which has produced them. I agree with the right hon. gent. also in the propriety of govt. taking the whole of the recruiting system into its own hands. I agree too, that the first part of the address ought to be voted, namely, thanks to his Majesty for his gracious communication, and an acknowledgment of the zeal of the people of Ireland; but there I think the address ought to stop for the present. I am not, without much further consideration, prepared to say yes to the remainder of the address, which will tie down this House to every thing but the mere detail of a system, the principles of which I do not approve, and for the consideration of which this House has not had time enough and, therefore, I shall move, by way of amendment to this address, to leave out all the latter part of it, for the purpose of inserting the words, "and that we shall take the same into our most serious consideration,"—The question being put,

Lord Castlereagh said, he should follow the example of the right hon. gent. who had just sat down, by not entering into the general statement that had been so ably made by his right hon. friend. The general principle upon which that statement rested, was so intimately connected with the address, that one could not support one part without approving of the whole. The objections of the right hon.

gent. to the proposed measure, rested principally on two grounds, 1st, with respect to the description of force to be brought to this country, namely, Irish militia; next with respect to the discretionary power to be granted to his Majesty of augmenting the Irish militia. The measure for employing 10,000 Irish militia in this country, if not complied with, the power of augmenting the militia would certainly be liable to objection. The Irish militia, in their present offers, were but discharging the debt of gratitude which they owed to this country, though the circumstances of the danger of Great Britain were certainly not such as to call for these offers of service on the part of the Irish militia. The principle on which his right hon. friend proposed, not to augment the militia beyond a certain number, was because, from certain considerations it had not been deemed expedient to increase that description of force beyond a certain proportion to the regular force of the country, which at the present including cavalry, amounted to 350,000. The manner of making the augmentation was exactly similar to what had been adopted last war, by adding thirty men to each company, which might be trained by the officers and non-commissioned officers without additional expence. Another argument for augmenting the Irish militia would not apply to the English, because from the manner of raising the men there by bounties of 4 guineas each, it would not interrupt the regular recruiting; whereas the high price of substitutes in England, amounting in some counties to 30l. and 40l. would. The noble Lord did not think that we should yet abdicate any description of force, but rather put them all in the most respectable situation. And with a view to the best means of recruiting the army, he did not think that in 12 months the regular forces would be more than would be necessary for defence and offensive operations. His right hon. friend had proposed two modes of adding to the regular forces: first, by liberating a portion of the disposable force equal to the number of Irish militia to be employed here, and by augmenting the Irish militia. The right hon. gent. had observed, that a case of strong necessity only could justify the measure; but he contended that the policy of adopting it constituted the necessity. As to the expression of satisfaction which the right hon. gent. had used at

finding his right hon. friend come round to his opinions at last, he should only say, that he felt great satisfaction himself that he had been so slow in adopting them, because if they had been adopted at the period first stated, we could not now have the same commanding force which we at present possessed, nor the same adequate means of defence which the military measures that had been pursued supplied us with. No gent. could look back to the progress and consequences of these measures, and say that he could play the game better. If the right hon. gent. had looked at the statement, he would have found, that in the short space of 4 or 5 months, there had been obtained from the army of reserve, for the regular army, 10,300 men; by the ordinary recruiting in the last year 9,600; and for the artillery 4,000; making in the whole the number who had enlisted for general service in the last year, 23,900. The noble Lord then stated the number who had been recruited for the regular army in the year between the 1st of Jan. 1801, and Jan. 1802, to be 15,460; in the following year, to Jan. 1803, 8,900; and in the year ending Jan. 1804, 9,622; little inferior to the number raised in the last year of last war, though the bounties had been then as high as 15l. per man, and exceeding the number obtained during the year of peace.

Mr. *Bastard* expressed a hope, that the right hon. gent. would withdraw his amendment, as it would be understood, that by suffering the address to be voted, he should not be precluded from giving every opposition he might feel it his duty to make, to any measure which might appear to trench upon the fundamental principles of the constitution of the militia forces.

Dr. *Laurence*, from what had fallen from the hon. member who had just sat down, was inclined to conclude that there were two questions to be considered as to the address and amendment, and that by voting for the address, gent. would be considered as pledged to the subsequent measures. The noble Lord might, possibly, from his acquaintance with the state of Ireland, be capable of forming an opinion whether 10,000 men could be spared well at this time; but, for his own part, unless a case of strong necessity should be made out, he should not accede to such a measure. In 1798, when the English militia volunteered their services to Ireland, there was a rebellion raging there, which left

the House no alternative. In the present instance, when boasting of our 400,000 volunteers, and our other military strength, he thought there was no great necessity for going to beg 10,000 men in Ireland. If any gent. were to ask, in what part of the empire 10,000 men were most wanting, he would be answered, in Ireland.—Whence were these 10,000 men to be taken? From Ireland! Ministers had been in the habit of stating in that House, that the attempt at invasion would be made in a few weeks; but every man who was in the smallest degree a statesman, must know, that no attempt would be made from Boulogne, until the enemy could find themselves in a state to make their grand attack, on which they most relied, on Ireland; and from Brest, in which harbour they had collected an immense quantity of stores during the peace, and made indefatigable exertions to put their navy on a respectable footing since the commencement of the war. He could not see on what principle the disciplined troops were to be removed from a country, the object of the avowed designs of the enemy, for the purpose of leaving its defence to raw levies. The learned member here re-urged the arguments of his right hon. friend (Mr. Windham), and contended, that if more men were to be raised, they should be called fencibles, not militia, as they should be enlisted by bounties. He next adverted to the assertion of the noble lord, that the militia might be carried too far, if extended beyond a certain proportion in respect to the regular force in the country, and commented with much point and ability on the measures that had been pursued during the last year. He insisted that all the advantage derived from the army of reserve in supplying the regular army, was derived from the advice and opinions of his right hon. friend. He accused ministers of committing and recommitting, and altering again and again their measures so often, that at last they did not know their own works, and afterwards taking to themselves the merit of every thing that was found in every legislative regulation, although almost every thing valuable of that sort, since the commencement of their administration, was the suggestion of some one or other who had no connection with them, generally one of their direct opponents. He was decidedly in favour of the amendment.

The Hon. C. H. Hutchinson declared, that the address had his most hearty approbation, as far as it went with respect to the Irish militia, but he was sorry to see the word "several" in the resolution, when he was certain that the "unanimous" determination of the Irish militia might be depended on, if their services were required. However their intentions were laudable and generous on their part, to assist the crown in any part of the empire, and to make a return for the liberal assistance which had been afforded to their country at a former period, would any military man say that it was consistent with sound policy to withdraw disciplined troops from a country which was particularly and avowedly threatened with an immediate attack, and to place in their stead the same number of raw, undisciplined troops, which might require 2 years before they would arrive to an equal state of perfection? Was it wise, or was it just or politic, he would ask any gent., when a country was threatened with immediate invasion, to withdraw 10,000 of as fine peasantry as any in the world, from its native resources of defence, and to withdraw along with them the gent. of the first respectability in wealth or influence within that country, from the assistance which they could otherwise afford it by their wisdom, their power, and their connexions? If England were situated as Ireland now is, would the country gent. of England think it reasonable? He knew that his Majesty's ministers did not possess the power to enforce the extension of the services of a militia force, but he explored the country gent. to consider whether it would not be better to recommend a change of the militia of the two countries, than to leave 10,000 recruits to be raised in the place of an equal number of well-disciplined troops, which were to be withdrawn from its defence. He had often recommended to his Majesty's ministers to inquire into the state of Ireland; but unfortunately for that country, and to the disgrace of the ministers, they had never thought fit to inquire into the business. He was convinced, however, that if a number of the enlightened part of this country, the superior officers of the militia, were to go over to Ireland during a time of such peril as the present, and were to see the struggles that would be made by the great majority of that people in the defence of their king and of their constitution, they would, nay, they must, consistent with their own good sense, come back when the contest was

over with a thorough conviction on their minds, that those people deserved better treatment than they had hitherto received from the servants of that crown for which they were ready to face any foe. however formidable or however specious might be his pretences.—He would not consider himself bound to the support of any future measure that might be brought forward by the bill; but, inasmuch as the address expressed an approbation of the loyal and gallant offers which had been made, he would for the present give his vote in support of it, but would at a future period declare his sentiments freely with respect to any provision which might tend to weaken the native defence of the country in a moment so important as the present.

Mr. *Banks* thought this a matter of very serious moment, which deserved the most mature consideration, and, therefore, he should be inclined to vote for delay. The House, by this address, would, he thought be in some measure pledged to reciprocal services; and this was a question of such magnitude; that some time ought to be allowed to consider it properly. He thought it highly dangerous to draw troops from Ireland at the present moment, as that country was in greater danger than this country was. He was of opinion that nothing could be gained by hurrying the measure, as the bill could only be read a first time before the recess. He had opposed the sending of our militia to Ireland in 1798, but he could not help being a little surprized that the right hon. gent. who was so eager for the measure then, should now oppose one which was founded on the same principle. It would certainly, however, be necessary to give forces of some sort in place of these 10,000 men, and he saw no description of force that could so well answer the purpose, as those very men that were to be taken away. He would, therefore, vote for the amendment.

Mr. *Windham* explained, by observing, that he had never been very eager on the subject, and if he had, it would not have been inconsistent with his present conduct, as the times were materially different.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* opposed the amendment, and in answer to what had fallen from a right hon. gent. (Mr. *Windham*), in asserting that he was not an eager and warm supporter of the measure in the last war, for enabling his Majesty to accept the offers of several regiments of the British militia to serve in Ireland; and

that so far from eagerly supporting that measure, he had said nothing on the occasion; he could not but exceedingly regret that the right hon. gent. had on that occasion sat silent, instead of speaking those objections to the constitutionality of the measure which he had offered this night. His very silence on the former occasion was a proof of his approbation of it then; for if he entertained those opinions on the former occasion, which he had expressed on the present, then had he acted very inconsistently with his duty as a member of parliament; and after being silent upon the first introduction of such a measure, it ill became him to express those objections now. But whatever disposition the House might feel to indulge the right hon. gent. with a delay of this measure, it should not be forgotten that a prompt respect was due to the gallant and patriotic ardour of the Irish militia: for what must they think, on being told that the services which they so gallantly offered could not be accepted without a breach of faith with them? His hon. friend who had last sat down who opposed the measure, did not seem to observe, that in approving the ardour of the Irish militia on this occasion, and promising to take into their consideration his Majesty's recommendation, the wording of the proposed address was extremely guarded, and only proposed to enable his Majesty to a certain limited extent to accept their services; but surely, it was not fitting that, during the whole period of the approaching recess, those gallant militia regiments, and the govt. of Ireland, through whom their offer came, should remain in suspense and uncertainty on this subject, and be left in doubt whether or not the parliament would enable his Majesty to accept their loyal and spirited offer. As to the idea that there could be any intention suddenly to strip Ireland of 10,000 men, nothing could be more erroneous. The object which govt. had in view was that so often desired by those gent. who now opposed this measure; namely to set at liberty a disposable force of 10,000 men for offensive operations. It was not intended suddenly to withdraw the whole of the 10,000 from that country; but 5,000 brought hither, would set at liberty as many troops of the line from the establishment of this country, and those might be replaced by 5,000 of another species of force to Ireland, which would set at liberty 5,000 troops of the line there

too. But it was by no means the intention to diminish the strength of Ireland. It had been objected, that the measure of increasing the Irish militia to the establishment of last war, by the addition of 30 men per company, would be a measure of slow progress, but he had the best authority for thinking it was one that would be effected with the utmost expedition; that it was the most economical as well as the most rapid mode of increasing the public force in Ireland, and the speediest for effecting the discipline of such an additional force. No time was to be lost; much certainly would be lost by the delay proposed. The most general opportunity should be given to the Irish militia regiments on this occasion to manifest their zeal and display their loyalty. He understood vast numbers were ready to come forward with their services, and only awaited the sanction of parliament, a sanction which ought not to be withheld for a moment, and, therefore, he gave his vote for the original address.

Mr. *Windham* again explained, by observing, that the reason was not now so powerful for accepting the services of the Irish militia as it was formerly for sending the English militia to Ireland.

Sir *John Newport* expressed his exultation that the loyalty and affection of the great body of the people of Ireland stood vindicated in the estimation of his Majesty's ministers. Such was what he inferred from the declarations of one of them, and in which sentiment he trusted they all agreed; the loyal and patriotic offers of the militia, who he believed to a man would cheerfully volunteer their services, was a striking proof, to a very great extent, of the truth with which he wished to impress the House. The charge of disaffection against the great bulk of the Irish people, was most groundlessly made. He trusted, they would all in the hour of danger, whatever may be the differences in their religious tenets, stand forth and defend the crown and constitution of the united realm against all attacks whatever. There were certainly some few among the very lowest orders of the people, who, bound by no ties, or influenced by no just principle, were prone to wish for changes in the govt. in the hopes of being able to gratify their own unruly passions and propensities, and so far may be held as disaffected, and such there were in Ireland in common with other countries; but with

respect to the great body of the people, he repeated, his Majesty had not more true, firm, or loyal subjects in all the empire than those of Ireland.

Colonel *Calcrafft* begged leave to offer a few observations upon the subject before the House. If he understood the nature of the case rightly there was no necessity whatever for the hasty decision passed by his Majesty's ministers. He was informed by an officer of great respectability, that the Irish govt. had offers of service from some of the militia regiments so long since as 4 months; if this was the fact, the consideration of the subject, surely would admit a suspension of half a dozen days, to allow parliament time to deliberate on the principle of so great importance as that involved in the address. He defended his right hon. friend, so he hoped he might call him, from the charge of inconsistency in the opinions delivered by him. The state of Ireland at the time alluded to should be considered. A rebellion raged in the heart of the country, and we could spare no other force to resist or to suppress it then, but our militia; he had some opportunities of knowing the state of the popular mind in Ireland and he was not quite so sanguine as to the extinction of disaffection therein as some gent. seemed to be, and much still remained to be done, before that spirit was obliterated. There were other objections which he entertained to a hasty decision upon the subject. He recollected on a former occasion, the total want of discipline that prevailed, while the sentiments of the militia corps were ascertaining upon the point of extension of service; and he trusted, he should never again have occasion to go round canvassing his men on such a subject.

Mr. *Grenville* made a few general observations upon the subject in support of the arguments advanced by his right hon. friend (Mr. *Windham*). He would put it to ministers whether, if similar offers were made on the part of the militia of England, they were prepared to say they would not propose measures for carrying such into effect? He expatiated on the importance of the subject, which, it would appear, in the way it seemed to be treated, they were brought to discuss by stealth.

Mr. *Archdall* expressed his hope, that neither ministers nor the House would allow a question of such importance as the present, to be treated of by stealth. On the contrary, he hoped it would fully and

clearly meet the unanimous approbation of parliament. The eulogium of the hon. Bart. on the loyalty of the bulk of the people of Ireland, was unnecessary? Who ever doubted it? It was said that the militia service had received a blow; with respect to that of Ireland, he knew not what blow it received, but he well knew what blows it gave—it gave rebellion in that country a mortal blow, they gave repeated blows to their enemy,—and he was confident they would do so again, whenever the opportunity was afforded them.

Lord *De Blaquiere* was proceeding to deliver his sentiments, when he was interrupted by

The *Speaker*, who said, he believed the noble Lord had misconceived the nature of the amendment. He then stated the question and the amendment by which it was proposed to leave out the latter part of the address.

Lord *De Blaquiere* then resumed, and observed, he conceived himself at first perfectly in order, as his intention was to express his approbation of the address, as he deemed it highly proper at so critical a period to accept the services which had been tendered with so much loyalty: he was surprised that any hesitation should exist for a moment to accept the proffered services of so large a body of loyal men in arms. With respect to an equal offer of service on the part of the English militia, he well knew the beneficial tendency of such a proceeding. He recollected their signal service to the empire at large while employed in Ireland. To their exertions the salvation of that country was owing. Were it not that the regiments of Lord Buckingham and the Duke of Rutland landed so opportunely as they did, that country would no longer have appertained to Britain. He hoped the English militia would voluntarily come forward and extend their services to Ireland. But he reprobated the idea of this being done in the way of stipulation. Was the ardour of either militia clogged in such a way, it would be injurious to both countries, and an insult to one. He thought the militia of Ireland could render the greatest service to the empire at large, when employed out of Ireland, problematical as this may appear. He felt it to be the case. He felt how it must operate, when a father and two or three of his sons were, perhaps, fighting against the rest of his family. He was aware of the effect of religious preju-

dices, which he lamented did yet unavoidably exist. In short, he was convinced those men would be more advantageously employed any where than at their own thresholds.

Lord *Folkestone* made a few observations in support of what had fallen from gentlemen on his side of the House. He particularly touched upon the fact alluded to by Mr. Calcraft, that some of the offers of service were made four months ago, which he considered as an argument in favour of postponing the discussion; and he took occasion to deprecate the practice of suffering military bodies to deliberate.—The question was loudly called for, and the gallery was cleared preparatory to a division. No such proceeding, however, took place. The address was carried as originally proposed.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, March 29.

[MINUTES].—Mr. Steele stated at the bar that his Majesty had been waited on with the address of that hon. House, and that his Majesty had been pleased to receive it in the most gracious manner.—Sir J. Newport presented a petition from J. Ogle, Esq. complaining of an undue election and return for the borough of Ilchester. Ordered to be taken into consideration on the 19th of April.—The Secretary at War brought up the bill for empowering his Majesty to accept of the services of such part of the militia of Ireland as may voluntarily offer themselves to serve and to be employed in G. Britain. Read a first time.—Mr. Calcraft moved, that an humble address be presented to his Majesty, praying that he would be most graciously pleased to order, that there be laid before the House a list of the regiments of Irish militia which had volunteered the extension of their services, with the names of the officers, and the dates of their respective offers. Ordered.—The Irish Militia Families Bill was read a third time and passed.—The bill for the Augmentation of the Militia of Ireland to an extent and for a time to be limited, was brought up, and read a first time.

[LOYALTY LOAN].—The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* observed, that there was on the order book a notice of a motion respecting the holders of stock in the Loyalty Loan. He had considered the subject maturely, and no doubt it was a

LIST OF ACTS

Passed in the present Session of Parliament, and in the 44th Year of the Reign of his present Majesty, George III.; containing those passed since the Christmas Recess on the 20th of December, 1803, to the Easter Recess, March 29, 1804; with the date of their meeting the Royal Assent. (For the Acts passed to the Christmas Recess see p. 383).

Chap. 19. An act for punishing mutiny and desertion; and for the better payment of the army and their quarters, [passed 9th March, 1804.]

20. An act for the regulation of his Majesty's royal marine forces while on shore. [9th March, 1804.]

21. An act to continue, until 3 months after any restriction imposed, by any act of the present session of Parliament on the Bank of England from issuing cash in payments shall cease. An act made in Parliament of Ireland in the 37th of his present Majesty, for confirming and continuing the restrictions on payments in cash by the Bank of Ireland, and also an act made in the 43d of his present Majesty for amending the said act. [9th March, 1804.]

22. An act to indemnify all persons who have been concerned in issuing or carrying into execution an order of the Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's Treasury, for permitting the exportation of seed corn to Portugal, from Great Britain. [9th March 1804.]

23. An act for allowing vessels employed in the Greenland Whale Fishery, and clearing out from any port in Great Britain, to complete their full number of men at certain ports for the present season. [9th March, 1804.]

24. An act for further continuing, until the 25th of March, 1806, an act made in the 33d of his present Majesty, for rendering the payment of creditors more equal and expeditious in Scotland. [9th March, 1804.]

25. An act to enable his Majesty to grant the inheritance in fee-simple, of certain manors, messuages, lands, and hereditaments, in the parishes of Byfleet, Weybridge, Walton, Walton Leigh, and Chertsey, in the County of Surry, to his Royal Highness Frederick Duke of York and Albany, for a valuable consideration. [9th March, 1804.]

26. An act for charging, until the 25th day of March, 1805, certain rates and draw-

backs, and for allowing certain bounties and drawbacks upon goods, wares, and merchandize, imported into and exported from Ireland; and also, for charging certain inland duties of excise and taxes in Ireland in lieu of former rates, duties, taxes, bounties, and drawbacks. [23d March, 1804.]

27. An act for charging, until the 25th day of March, 1805, certain increased countervailing duties on the importation into Ireland, of the several goods, wares, and merchandize therein mentioned, being the growth, produce, or manufacture of Great Britain; and for allowing increased drawbacks on the exportation to Great Britain of the several articles therein mentioned being the manufacture of Ireland. [23d March, 1804.]

28. An act for granting to his Majesty a duty upon malt made in Ireland, for the year 1804. [23d March, 1804.]

29. An act for permitting, until the 5th day of May, 1805, the importation of hides, calve skins, horns, tallow, and wool, (except cotton wool,) in foreign ships, on payment of the like duties as if imported in British or Irish ships. [23d March, 1804.]

30. An act to revive and continue, until 8 months after the ratification of a definitive treaty of peace, an act, made in the 42d of his present Majesty, for repealing several acts relating to the admission of certain articles of merchandize in neutral ships, and to the issuing orders in council for that purpose, and for making other provisions in lieu thereof; and also, to indemnify all persons who have been concerned in issuing or carrying into execution orders of council for permitting the importation of certain goods from America in neutral ships. [23d March, 1804.]

31. An act for raising the further sum of two millions by loans or exchequer bills, on the credit of such aids or supplies as have been or shall be granted by Parliament for the service of Great Britain, for the year 1804. [23d March, 1804.]

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